

# SAINT PAULS.

JANUARY, 1872.

SEPTIMIUS.\*

*A ROMANCE OF IMMORTALITY.*

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

It was a day in early spring; and as that sweet, genial time of year and atmosphere calls out tender greenness from the ground—beautiful flowers, or leaves that look beautiful because so long unseen under the snow and decay—so the pleasant air and warmth had called out three young people, who sat on a sunny hill-side, enjoying the warm day, and one another. For they were all friends; two of them young men, and playmates from boyhood; the third, a girl who, two or three years younger than themselves, had been the object of their boy-love, their little rustic, childish gallantries, their budding affections; until, growing all towards manhood and womanhood, they had ceased to talk about such matters, perhaps thinking about them the more.

These three young people were neighbours' children, dwelling in houses that stood by the side of the great Lexington road, along a ridgy hill that rose abruptly behind them, its brow covered with a wood, and which stretched, with one or two breaks and interruptions, into the heart of the village of Concord, the county town. It was in the side of this hill that, according to tradition, the first settlers of the village had burrowed in caverns, which they had dug out for their shelter, like swallows and woodchucks. As its slope was towards the south, and its ridge and crowning woods defended them from the fierce northern blasts and snowdrifts, it was an admirable situation for the fierce New England winter; and the temperature was milder, by several degrees, along this hill-side, than on the unprotected

\* This work, the last written by the author, is printed as he left it. The retention of the passages within brackets (*e. g.*, page 16), which show how Mr. Hawthorne intended to amplify some of the descriptions and develop more fully one or two of the character-studies, will not be regretted by appreciative readers.—EDITOR.

plains, or by the river, or in any other part of Concord. So that here, during the hundred years that had elapsed since the first settlement of the place, dwellings had successively risen, close to the hill's foot, and the meadow that lay on the other side of the road—a fertile tract—had been cultivated; and these three young people were the children's children's children of persons of respectability, who had dwelt there—Rose Garfield, in a small house, the site of which is still indicated by the cavity of a cellar, in which I, this very past summer, planted some sunflowers, to thrust their great discs out from the hollow and allure the bee and the humming-bird; Robert Hagburn, in a house of somewhat more pretension, a hundred yards or so nearer to the village, standing back from the road, in the broader space which the retreating hill, cloven by a gap in that place, afforded; where some elms intervened between it and the road, offering a site which some person of a natural taste for the gently picturesque had seized upon. Those same elms, or their successors, still flung a noble shade over the same old house, which the magic hand of Alcott has improved by the touch with which he throws grace, aimiableness, natural beauty over scenes that have little pretension in themselves.

Now, the other young man, Septimius Felton, dwelt in a small wooden house, then, I suppose, of some score of years' standing; a two-storey house, gabled before, but with only two rooms on a floor, crowded upon by the hill behind—a house of thick walls, as if the projector had that sturdy feeling of permanence in life which incites people to make strong their earthly habitations, as if deluding themselves with the idea that they could still inhabit them; in short, an ordinary dwelling of a well-to-do New England farmer, such as his race had been for two or three generations past, although there were traditions of ancestors who had led lives of thought and study, and possessed all the erudition that the universities of England could bestow. Whether any natural turn for study had descended to Septimius from these worthies, or how his tendencies came to be different from those of his family; who, within the memory of the neighbourhood, had been content to sow and reap the rich field in front of their homestead; so it was, that Septimius had early manifested a taste for study. By the kind aid of the good minister of the town, he had been fitted for college; had passed through Cambridge, by means of what little money his father had left him, and by his own exertions in school-keeping; and was now a recently decorated baccalaureate, with, as was understood, a purpose to devote himself to the ministry, under the auspices of that reverend and good friend whose support and instruction had already stood him in such stead.

Now here were these young people, on that beautiful spring morning, sitting on the hill-side, a pleasant spectacle of fresh life; pleasant, as if they had sprouted, like green things, under the influence of

the warm sun. The girl was very pretty, a little freckled, a little tanned, but with a face that glimmered and gleamed with quick and cheerful expressions; a slender form, not very large, with a quick grace in its movements; sunny hair, that had a tendency to curl, which she probably favoured at such moments as her household occupation left her; a sociable and pleasant child, as both of the young men evidently thought. Robert Hagburn, one might suppose, would have been the most to her taste; a ruddy, burly young fellow, handsome, and free of manner, six feet high, famous through the neighbourhood for strength and athletic skill, the early promise of what was to be a man fit for all offices of active rural life, and to be, in mature age, the select man, the deacon, the representative, the colonel. As for Septimius, let him alone a moment or two, and then they would see him, with his head bent down, brooding, brooding, his eyes fixed on some chip, some stone, some common plant, any commonest thing, as if it were the clue and index to some mystery; and when, by chance startled out of these meditations, he lifted his eyes, there would be a kind of perplexity, a dissatisfied, foiled look in them, as if, of his speculations, he found no end. Such was now the case, while Robert and the girl were running on with a gay talk about a serious subject, so that, gay as it was, it was interspersed with little thrills of fear on the girl's part, of excitement on Robert's. Their talk was of public trouble.

"My grandfather says," said Rose Garfield, "that we shall never be able to stand against old England, because the men are a weaker race than he remembers in his day, weaker than his father who came from England, and the women slighter still; so that we are dwindling away, grandfather thinks, only a little sprightlier, he says sometimes, looking at me."

"Lighter, to be sure," said Robert Hagburn; "there is the lightness of the English women compressed into little space. I have seen them, and know. And as to the men, Rose, if they have lost one spark of courage and strength that their English forefathers brought from the old land—lost any one good quality without having made it up by as good or better—then, for my part, I don't want the breed to exist any longer. And this war that they say is coming on, will be a good opportunity to test the matter. Septimius! Don't you think so?"

"Think what?" asked Septimius, gravely lifting up his head.

"Think! why, that your countrymen are worthy to live," said Robert Hagburn, impatiently. "For there is a question on that point."

"It is hardly worth answering or considering," said Septimius, looking at him thoughtfully. "We live so little while, that (always setting aside the effect on a future existence) it is little matter whether we live or no."

"Little matter!" said Rose, at first bewildered, then laughing; "little matter! when it is such a comfort to live, so pleasant, so sweet."

"Yes, and so many things to do," said Robert; "to make fields yield produce; to be busy among men, and happy among the women-folk; to play, work, fight, and be active in many ways."

"Yes; but so soon stilled, before your activity has come to any definite end," responded Septimius gloomily. "I doubt, if it had been left to my choice, whether I should have taken existence on such terms; so much trouble of preparation to live, and then no life at all; a ponderous beginning, and nothing more."

"Do you find fault with Providence, Septimius?" asked Rose, a feeling of solemnity coming over her cheerful and buoyant nature. Then she burst out a-laughing. "How grave he looks, Robert,—as if he had lived two or three lives already, and knew all about the value of it. But I think it was worth while to be born, if only for the sake of one such pleasant spring morning as this; and God gives us many and better things when these are past."

"We hope so," said Septimius, who was again looking on the ground. "But who knows?"

"I thought you knew," said Robert Hagburn. "You have been to college, and have learned, no doubt, a great many things. You are a student of theology, too, and have looked into these matters. Who should know, if not you?"

"Rose and you have just as good means of ascertaining these points as I," said Septimius; "all the certainty that can be had, lies on the surface, as it should, and equally accessible to every man or woman. If we try to grope deeper, we labour for nought, and get less wise, while we try to be more so. If life were long enough to enable us to thoroughly sift these matters, then, indeed! but it is so short!"

"Always this same complaint," said Robert. "Septimius, how long do you wish to live?"

"For ever," said Septimius. "It is none too long for all I wish to know."

"For ever!" exclaimed Rose, and shivering doubtfully. "Ah! there would come many, many thoughts, and after a while we should want a little rest."

"For ever!" said Robert Hagburn. "And what would the people do who wish to fill our places? You are unfair, Septimius. Live and let live! Turn about! Give me my seventy years, and let me go—my seventy years of what this life has—toil, enjoyment, suffering, struggle, fight, rest; only let me have my share of what's going, and I shall be content."

"Content with leaving everything at odd ends! content with being nothing, as you were before!"

"No, Septimius—content with heaven at last," said Rose, who had come out of her laughing mood into a sweet seriousness. "Oh dear!



think what a worn and ugly thing one of these fresh little blades of grass would seem if it were not to fade and wither in its time after being green in its time."

"Well, well, my pretty Rose," said Septimius apart, "an immortal weed is not very lovely to think of, that is true; but I should be content with one thing, and that is yourself, if you were immortal, just as you are at seventeen, so fresh, so dewy, so red-lipped, so golden-haired, so gay, so frolicksome, so gentle."

"But I am to grow old, and to be brown and wrinkled, grey-haired and ugly," said Rose, rather sadly, as she thus enumerated the items of her decay, "and then you would think me all lost and gone. But still there might be youth underneath, for one that really loved me to see. Ah, Septimius Felton! such love as would see with ever new eyes is the true love."

And she ran away and left him suddenly, and Robert Hagburn departing at the same time, this little knot of three was dissolved, and Septimius went along the wayside wall, thoughtfully, as was his wont, to his own dwelling. He had stopped for some moments on the threshold, vaguely enjoying, it is probable, the light and warmth of the new spring day, and the sweet air, which was somewhat unwonted to the young man, because he was accustomed to spend much of his day in thought and study within doors, and, indeed, like most studious young men, was over fond of the fireside and of making life as artificial as he could, by fireside heat and lamplight, in order to suit it to the artificial intellectual and moral atmosphere which he derived from books, instead of living healthfully in the open air, and among his fellow-beings. Still he felt the pleasure of being warmed through by this natural heat, and though blinking a little from its superfluity, could not but confess an enjoyment and cheerfulness in this flood of morning light that came aslant the hill-side. While he thus stood, he felt a friendly hand laid upon his shoulder, and looking up, there was the minister of the village, the old friend of Septimius, to whose advice and aid it was owing that Septimius had followed his instincts by going to college, instead of spending a thwarted and dissatisfied life in the field that fronted the house. He was a man of middle age, or little beyond, of a sagacious, kindly aspect; the experience, the life-long, intimate acquaintance with many concerns of his people being more apparent in him than the scholarship for which he had been early distinguished. A tanned man, like one who laboured in his own grounds occasionally; a man of homely, plain address, which when occasion called for it, he could readily exchange for the polished manner of one who had seen a more refined world than this about him.

"Well, Septimius," said the minister kindly, "have you yet come to any conclusion about the subject of which we have been talking?"

"Only so far, sir," replied Septimius, "that I find myself every

day less inclined to take up the profession which I have had in view so many years. I do not think myself fit for the sacred desk."

"Surely not; no one is," replied the clergyman; "but if I may trust my own judgment, you have at least many of the intellectual qualifications that should adapt you to it. There is something of the Puritan character in you, Septimius, derived from holy men among your ancestors; as, for instance, a deep, brooding turn, such as befits that heavy brow; a disposition to meditate on things hidden; a turn for meditative inquiry;—all these things, with grace to boot, mark you as the germ of a man who might do God service. Your reputation as a scholar stands high at college. You have not a turn for worldly business."

"Ah, but sir," said Septimius, casting down his heavy brows, "I lack something within."

"Faith, perhaps," replied the minister; "at least, you think so."

"Cannot I know it?" asked Septimius.

"Scarcely, just now," said his friend. "Study for the ministry; bind your thoughts to it; pray; ask a belief, and you will soon find you have it. Doubts may occasionally press in; and it is so with every clergyman. But your prevailing mood will be faith."

"It has seemed to me," observed Septimius, "that it is not the prevailing mood, the most common one, that is to be trusted. This is habit, formality, the shallow covering which we close over what is real, and seldom suffer to be blown aside. But it is the snake-like doubt that thrusts out its head, which gives us a glimpse of reality. Surely such moments are a hundred times as real as the dull, quiet moments of faith, or what you call such."

"I am sorry for you," said the minister; "yet to a youth of your frame of character, of your ability, I will say, and your requisition for something profound in the grounds of your belief, it is not unusual to meet this trouble. Men like you have to fight for their faith. They fight, in the first place to win it, and ever afterwards to hold it. The devil tilts with them daily, and often seems to win."

"Yes," replied Septimius; "but he takes deadly weapons now. If he met me with the cold, pure steel of a spiritual argument, I might win or lose, and still not feel that all was lost; but he takes, as it were, a great clod of earth, massive rocks and mud, soil and dirt, and flings it at me overwhelmingly; so that I am buried under it."

"How is that?" said the minister. "Tell me more plainly."

"May it not be possible," asked Septimius, "to have too profound a sense of the marvellous contrivance and adaptation of this material world, to require or believe in anything spiritual? How wonderful it is to see it all alive on this spring day, all growing, budding! Do we exhaust it in our little life? Not so; not in a hundred or a thousand lives. The whole race of man, living from the beginning of time, have not, in all their number and multiplicity, and in all their

duration, come in the least to know the world they live in! And how is this rich world thrown away upon us, because we live in it such a moment! What mortal work has ever been done since the world began! Because we have no time. No lesson is taught. We are snatched away from our study before we have learned the alphabet. As the world now exists, I confess it to you frankly, my dear pastor and instructor, it seems to me all a failure, because we do not live long enough."

"But the lesson is carried on in another state of being!"

"Not the lesson that we begin here," said Septimius. "We might as well train a child in a primeval forest, to teach him how to live in a European court. No, the fall of man, which Scripture tells us of, seems to me to have its operation in this grievous shortening of earthly existence, so that our life here at all is grown ridiculous."

"Well, Septimius," replied the minister sadly, yet not as one shocked by what he had never heard before, "I must leave you to struggle through this form of unbelief as best you may, knowing that it is by your own efforts that you must come to the other side of this slough. We will talk further another time. You are getting worn out, my young friend, with much study and anxiety. It were well for you to live more, for the present, in this earthly life that you prize so highly. Cannot you interest yourself in the state of this country—in this coming strife, the voice of which now sounds so hoarsely and so near us? Come out of your thoughts, and breathe another air."

"I will try," said Septimius.

"Do," said the minister, extending his hand to him, "and in a little time you will find the change."

He shook the young man's hand kindly, and took his leave, while Septimius entered his house, and turning to the right, sat down in his study, where, before the fire-place, stood the table with books and papers. On the shelves, around the low-studded walls, were more books, few in number, but of an erudite appearance, many of them having descended to him from learned ancestors, and having been brought to light by himself after long lying in dusty closets; works of good and learned divines, whose wisdom he had happened, by help of the devil, to turn to mischief, reading them by the light of hell-fire. For, indeed, Septimius had but given the clergyman the merest partial glimpse of his state of mind. He was not a new beginner in doubt; but, on the contrary, it seemed to him as if he had never been other than a doubter and a questioner, even in his boyhood—believing nothing, although a thin veil of reverence had kept him from questioning some things. And now the new, strange thought of the sufficiency of the world for man, if man were only sufficient for that, kept recurring to him; and with it came a certain sense, which he had been conscious of before, that he, at least, might never die. The feeling was not peculiar to Septimius. It is

an instinct, the meaning of which is mistaken. We have strongly within us the sense of an undying principle, and we transfer that true sense to this life, and to the body, instead of interpreting it justly as the promise of spiritual immortality.

So Septimius looked up out of his thoughts, and said proudly :

"Why should I die? I cannot die, if worthy to live. What if I should say this moment that I will not die, not till ages hence, not till the world is exhausted. Let other men die, if they choose to yield; let him that is strong enough live!"

After this flush of heroic mood, however, the glow subsided, and poor Septimius spent the rest of the day, as was his wont, poring over his books, in which all the meanings seemed dead and mouldy, and like pressed leaves (some of which dropped out of the books as he opened them)—brown, brittle, sapless: so were the thoughts, which when the writers had gathered them, seemed to them so brightly coloured and full of life. Then he began to see that there must have been some principle of life left out of the book, so that these gathered thoughts lacked something that had given them their only value. Then he suspected that the way truly to live, and answer the purposes of life, was not to gather up thoughts into books, where they grew so dry, but to live, and still be going about, full of green wisdom, ripening ever, not in maxims cut and dry, but a wisdom ready for daily occasions, like a living fountain; and that to be this, it was necessary to exist long on earth, drink in all its lessons, and not to die on the attainment of some smattering of truth; but to live all the more for that; and apply it to mankind, and increase it thereby.

Everything drifted towards the strong, strange eddy into which his mind had been drawn: all his thoughts set hitherward.

So he sat brooding in his study until the shrill-voiced old woman—an aunt, who was his housekeeper and domestic ruler—called him to dinner—a frugal dinner—and chided him for seeming inattentive to a dish of early dandelions which she had gathered for him; but yet tempered her severity with respect for the future clerical rank of her nephew, and for his already being a bachelor of arts. The old woman's voice spoke outside of Septimius, rambling away, and he paying little heed, till at last dinner was over, and Septimius drew back his chair, about to leave the table.

"Nephew Septimius," said the old woman, "you began this meal to-day without asking a blessing, you get up from it without giving thanks, and you soon to be a minister of the Word."

"God bless the meat," replied Septimius (by way of blessing), "and make it strengthen us for the life He means us to bear. Thank God for our food," he added (by way of grace), "and may it become a portion in us of an immortal body."

"That sounds good, Septimius," said the old lady. "Ah! you'll be a mighty man in the pulpit, and worthy to keep up the name of

your great-grandfather, who, they say, made the leaves wither on a tree with the fierceness of his blast against a sin. Some say, to be sure, it was an early frost that helped him."

"I never heard that before, Aunt Keziah," said Septimius.

"I warrant you no," replied his aunt. "A man dies, and his greatness perishes as if it had never been, and people remember nothing of him—only when they see his gravestone over his old dry bones, they say he was a good man in his day."

"What truth there is in Aunt Keziah's words!" exclaimed Septimius. "And how I hate the thought and anticipation of that contemptuous appreciation of a man after his death. Every living man triumphs over every dead one, as he lies, poor and helpless, under the mould, a pinch of dust, a heap of bones, an evil odour! I hate the thought! It shall not be so!"

It was strange how every little incident thus brought him back to that one subject which was taking so strong hold of his mind—every avenue led thitherward; and he took it for an indication that Nature had intended, by innumerable ways, to point out to us the great truth that death was an alien misfortune, a prodigy, a monstrosity, into which man had only fallen by defect; and that even now, if a man had a reasonable portion of his original strength in him, he might live for ever, and spurn death.

Our story is an internal one, dealing as little as possible with outward events, and taking hold of these only where it cannot be helped, in order by means of them to delineate the history of a mind bewildered in certain errors. We would not willingly, if we could, give a lively and picturesque surrounding to this delineation, but it is necessary that we should advert to the circumstances of the time in which this inward history was passing. We will say, therefore, that that night there was a cry of alarm passing all through the succession of country towns and rural communities that lay around Boston, and dying away towards the coast and the wilder forest borders. Horsemen galloped past the line of farm-houses shouting Alarm! alarm! There were stories of marching troops coming like dreams through the midnight. Around the little rude meeting-houses there was here and there the beat of a drum, and the assemblage of farmers' neighbours with their weapons. So all that night there was marching, there was mustering, there was trouble; and, on the road from Boston, a steady march of soldiers' feet onward, onward into the land whose last warlike disturbance had been when the Red Indians trod it.

Septimius heard it, and knew, like the rest, that it was the sound of coming war. "Fools that men are!" said he, as he rose from bed and looked out at the misty stars; "they do not live long enough to know the value and purport of life, else they would combine together to live long, instead of throwing away the lives of thousands as they do. And what matters a little tyranny in so short

a life? What matters a form of government for such ephemeral creatures!"

As morning brightened, these sounds, this clamour—or something that was in the air and caused the clamour—grew so loud that Septimius seemed to feel it even in his solitude. It was in the atmosphere—storm, wild excitement, a coming deed. Men hurried along the usually lonely road in groups, with weapons in their hands—the old fowling-piece of seven-foot barrel, with which the Puritans had shot ducks on the river and Walden Pond; the heavy harquebuss, which perhaps had levelled one of King Philip's Indians; the old King Gun, that blazed away at the French of Louisburg or Quebec—hunter, husbandman, all were hurrying each other. It was a good time, everybody felt, to be alive; a nearer kindred, a closer sympathy between man and man; a sense of the goodness of the world; of the sacredness of country; of the excellence of life; and yet its slight account compared with any truth, any principle; the weighing of the material and etherial, and the finding the former not worth considering, when, nevertheless, it had so much to do with the settlement of the crisis. The ennobling of brute force; the feeling that it had its godlike side; the drawing of heroic breath amid the scenes of ordinary life, so that it seemed as if they had all been transfigured since yesterday. Oh, high, heroic, tremulous juncture, when man felt himself almost an angel; on the verge of doing deeds that outwardly look so fiendish! Oh, strange rapture of the coming battle! We know something of that time now; we that have seen the muster of the village soldiery on the meeting-house green, and at railway stations; and heard the drum and fife, and seen the farewells; seen the familiar faces that we hardly knew, now that we felt them to be heroes; breathed higher breath for their sakes; felt our eyes moistened; thanked them in our souls for teaching us that nature is yet capable of heroic moments; felt how a great impulse lifts up a people, and every cold, passionless, indifferent spectator; lifts him up into religion, and makes him join in what becomes an act of devotion, a prayer, when perhaps he but half approves.

Septimius could not study on a morning like this. He tried to say to himself that he had nothing to do with this excitement; that his studious life kept him away from it; that his intended profession was that of peace; but say what he might to himself, there was a tremor, a bubbling impulse, a tingling in his ears; the page that he opened glimmered and dazzled before him.

"Septimius! Septimius!" cried Aunt Keziah, looking into the room, "in Heaven's name, are you going to sit here to-day, and the red-coats coming to burn the house over our heads? Must I sweep you out with the broomstick? For shame, boy! for shame!"

"Are they coming, then, Aunt Keziah?" asked her nephew. "Well, I am not a fighting-man."

"Certain they are. They have sacked Lexington, and slain the people, and burnt the meeting-house. That concerns even the parsons; and you reckon yourself among them. Go out, go out, I say, and learn the news!"

Whether moved by these exhortations, or by his own stifled curiosity, Septimius did at length issue from his door, though with that reluctance which hampers and impedes men whose current of thought and interest runs apart from that of the world in general; but forth he came, feeling strangely, and yet with a strong impulse to fling himself headlong into the emotion of the moment. It was a beautiful morning, spring-like and summer-like at once. If there had been nothing else to do or think of, such a morning was enough for life, only to breathe its air, and be conscious of its inspiring influence.

Septimius turned along the road towards the village, meaning to mingle with the crowd on the green, and there learn all he could of the rumours that vaguely filled the air, and doubtless were shaping themselves into various forms of fiction.

As he passed the small dwelling of Rose Garfield, she stood on the doorstep, and bounded forth a little way to meet him, looking frightened, excited, and yet half pleased, but strangely pretty; prettier than ever before, owing to some hasty adornment or other, that she would never have succeeded so well in giving to herself if she had had more time to do it in.

"Septimius—Mr. Felton," cried she, asking information of him who, of all men in the neighbourhood, knew nothing of the intelligence afloat; but it showed a certain importance that Septimius had with her. "Do you really think the red-coats are coming? Ah, what shall we do? What shall we do? But you are not going to the village, too, and leave us all alone?"

"I know not whether they are coming or not, Rose," said Septimius, stopping to admire the young girl's fresh beauty, which made a double stroke upon him by her excitement, which, moreover, made her twice as free with him as ever she had been before; for there is nothing truer than that any breaking up of the ordinary state of things is apt to shake women out of their proprieties, break down barriers, and bring them into perilous proximity with the world. "Are you alone here? Had you not better take shelter in the village?"

"And leave my poor, bedridden grandmother!" cried Rose angrily. "You know I can't, Septimius. But I suppose I am in no danger. Go to the village, if you like."

"Where is Robert Hagburn?" asked Septimius.

"Gone to the village this hour past, with his grandfather's old firelock on his shoulder," said Rose; "he was running bullets before daylight."



"Rose, I will stay with you," said Septimius."

"Oh, gracious, here they come, I'm sure!" cried Rose. "Look yonder at the dust. Mercy! a man at a gallop!"

In fact, along the road, a considerable stretch of which was visible, they heard the clatter of hoofs, and saw a little cloud of dust, which approached at the rate of a gallop, and disclosed, as it drew near, a hatless countryman, in his shirt sleeves, who, bending over his horse's neck, applied a cart-whip lustily to the animal's flanks, so as to incite him to most unwonted speed. At the same time, glaring upon Rose and Septimius, he lifted up his voice, and shouted in a strange, high tone, that communicated the tremor and excitement of the shouter to each auditor:

"Alarum! alarum! alarum! The red-coats! The red-coats! To arms! alarum!"

And trailing this sound, far waving behind him, like a pennon, the eager horseman dashed onward to the village.

"Oh, dear, what shall we do?" cried Rose, her eyes full of tears, yet dancing with excitement. "They are coming! they are coming! I hear the drum and fife."

"I really believe they are," said Septimius, his cheek flushing and growing pale, not with fear, but the inevitable tremor, half painful, half pleasurable, of the moment. "Hark! there was the shrill note of a fife. Yes, they are coming!"

He tried to persuade Rose to hide herself in the house; but that young person would not be persuaded to do so, clinging to Septimius in a way that flattered while it perplexed him. Besides, with all the girl's fright, she had still a good deal of courage, and much curiosity, too, to see what these red-coats were, of whom she heard such terrible stories.

"Well, well, Rose," said Septimius, "I doubt not we may stay here without danger;—you, a woman, and I, whose profession is to be that of peace and good-will to all men. They cannot, whatever is said of them, be on an errand of massacre. We will stand here quietly; and, seeing that we do not fear them, they will understand that we mean them no harm."

They stood, accordingly, a little in front of the door, by the well curb, and soon they saw a heavy cloud of dust, from amidst which shone bayonets; and anon, a military band, which had hitherto been silent, struck up with drum and fife, to which the tramp of a thousand feet fell in regular order; then came the column, moving massively, and the red-coats, who seemed somewhat wearied by a long night-march, dusty, with bedraggled gaiters; covered with sweat, which had run down from their powdered locks. Nevertheless, these ruddy, lusty Englishmen marched stoutly, as men that needed only a half-hour's rest, a good breakfast, and a pot of beer apiece, to make them ready



to face the world. Nor did their faces look anywise rancorous; but at most, only heavy, cloddish, good-natured, and humane.

"Oh, heavens, Mr. Felton!" whispered Rose, "why should we shoot these men, or they us? they look kind, if homely. Each of them has a mother and sisters, I suppose, just like our men."

"It is the strangest thing in the world that we can think of killing them," said Septimius. "Human life is so precious."

Just as they were passing the cottage, a halt was called by the commanding officer, in order that some little rest might get the troops into a better condition, and give them breath, before entering the village, where it was important to make as imposing a show as possible. During this brief stop, some of the soldiers approached the well curb, near which Rose and Septimius were standing, and let down the bucket to satisfy their thirst. A young officer, a petulant boy, extremely handsome, and of gay and buoyant deportment, also came up.

"Get me a cup, pretty one," said he, patting Rose's cheek with great freedom, though it was somewhat and indefinitely short of rudeness; "a mug, or something to drink out of, and you shall have a kiss for your pains."

"Stand off, sir!" said Septimius fiercely; "it is a coward's part to insult a woman."

"I intend no insult in this," replied the handsome young officer, suddenly snatching a kiss from Rose, before she could draw back. "And if you think it so, my good friend, you had better take your weapon, and get as much satisfaction as you can, shooting at me from behind a hedge."

Before Septimius could reply or act—and, in truth, the easy presumption of the young Englishman made it difficult for him, an inexperienced recluse as he was, to know what to do or say—the drum beat a little tap, recalling the soldiers to their rank and to order. The young officer hastened back, with a laughing glance at Rose, and a light, contemptuous look of defiance at Septimius; the drums rattling out in full beat; and the troops marched on.

"What impertinence!" said Rose, whose indignant colour made her look pretty enough almost to excuse the offence.

It is not easy to see how Septimius could have shielded her from the insult; and yet he felt inconceivably outraged and humiliated at the thought that this offence had occurred while Rose was under his protection, and he responsible for her. Besides, somehow or other, he was angry with her for having undergone the wrong, though certainly most unreasonably; for the whole thing was quicker done than said.

"You had better go into the house now, Rose," said he, "and see to your bedridden grandmother."

"And what will you do, Septimius?" asked she.

"Perhaps I will house myself also," he replied. "Perhaps take yonder proud red-coat's counsel—and shoot him behind a hedge."

"But not kill him outright—I suppose he has a mother and a sweetheart, the handsome young officer," murmured Rose pityingly to herself.

Septimius went into his house, and sat in his study for some hours, in that unpleasant state of feeling which a man of brooding thought is apt to experience when the world around him is in a state of intense action, which he finds it impossible to sympathise with. There seemed to be a stream rushing past him, which, even if he plunged into the midst of it, he could not be wet by it. He felt himself strangely ajar with the human race, and would have given much either to be in full accord with it, or to be separated from it for ever.

"I am dissevered from it. It is my doom to be only a spectator of life; to look on as one apart from it. Is it not well, therefore, that sharing none of its pleasures and happiness, I should be free of its fatalities, its brevity? How cold I am now, while this whirlpool of public feeling is eddying around me! It is as if I had not been born of woman."

Thus it was, that drawing wild inferences from phenomena of the mind and heart, common to people who, by some morbid action within themselves, are set ajar with the world, Septimius continued still to come round to that strange idea of undyingness which had recently taken possession of him. And yet he was wrong in thinking himself cold, and that he felt no sympathy in the fever of patriotism that was throbbing through his countrymen. He was restless as a flame; he could not fix his thoughts upon his book; he could not sit in his chair; but kept pacing to and fro, while through the open window came noises to which his imagination gave diverse interpretation. Now it was a distant drum; now shouts; by-and-by there came the rattle of musketry, that seemed to proceed from some point more distant than the village; a regular roll, then a ragged volley, then scattering shots. Unable any longer to preserve this unnatural indifference, Septimius snatched his gun, and rushing out of the house, climbed the abrupt hill-side behind whence he could see a long way towards the village, till a slight bend hid the uneven road. It was quite vacant—not a passenger upon it. But there seemed to be confusion in that direction; an unseen and inscrutable trouble, blowing thence towards him, intimated by vague sounds—by no sounds. Listening eagerly, however, he at last fancied a mustering sound of the drum; then it seemed as if it were coming towards him; while in advance rode another horseman, the same kind of headlong messenger, in appearance, who had passed the house with his ghastly cry of alarm; then appeared scattered countrymen, with guns in their hands, straggling across fields. Then

he caught sight of the regular array of British soldiers, filling the road with their front, and marching along as firmly as ever, though at a quick pace, while he fancied that the officers looked watchfully around. As he looked, a shot rang sharp from the hill-side, towards the village ; the smoke curled up, and Septimius saw a man stagger and fall in the midst of the troops. Septimius shuddered ; it was so like murder that he really could not tell the difference ; his knees trembled beneath him ; his breath grew short, not with terror, but with some new sensation of awe.

Another shot or two came, almost simultaneously, from the wooded height, but without any effect, that Septimius could perceive. Almost at the same moment, a company of the British soldiers wheeled from the main body, and, dashing out of the road, climbed the hill, and disappeared into the wood and shrubbery that veiled it. There were a few straggling shots, by whom fired, or with what effect, was invisible, and meanwhile the main body of the enemy proceeded along the road. They had now advanced so nigh that Septimius was strangely assailed by the idea that he might, with the gun in his hand, fire right into the midst of them, and select any man of that now hostile band, to be a victim. How strange, how strange it is, this deep, wild passion that nature has implanted in us, to be the death of our fellow-creatures, and which coexists at the same time with horror. Septimius levelled his weapon, and drew it up again ; he marked a mounted officer, who seemed to be in chief command, whom he knew that he could kill. But no ! he had really no such purpose. Only it was such a temptation. And, in a moment, the horse would leap, the officer would fall, and lie there in the dust of the road, bleeding, gasping, breathing in spasms, breathing no more.

While the young man, in these unusual circumstances, stood watching the marching of the troops, he heard the noise of rustling boughs, and the voices of men, and soon understood that the party, which he had seen separate itself from the main body and ascend the hill, was now marching along on the hill-top, the long ridge, which, with a gap or two, extended as much as a mile from the village. One of these gaps occurred a little way from where Septimius stood. They were acting as flank guard, to prevent the uproused people from coming so close to the main body as to fire upon it. He looked and saw that the detachment of British was plunging down one side of this gap, with intent to ascend the other ; so that they would pass directly over the spot where he stood ; a slight removal to one side, among the small bushes, would conceal him. He stepped aside accordingly, and from his concealment, not without drawing quicker breaths, beheld the party draw near. They were more intent upon the space between them and the main body, than upon the dense thicket of birch-trees, pitch-pines, sumach, and dwarf oaks, which

scarcely yet beginning to bud into leaf, lay on the other side, and in which Septimius lurked.

[Describe how their faces affected him, passing so near; how strange they seemed.]

They had all passed, except an officer who brought up the rear, and who had perhaps been attracted by some slight motion that Septimius made, some rustle in the thicket; for he stopped, fixed his eyes piercingly towards the spot where he stood, and levelled a light fusil which he carried. "Stand out, or I shoot," said he.

Not to avoid the shot, but because his manhood felt a call upon it not to skulk in obscurity from an open enemy, Septimius at once stood forth, and confronted the same handsome young officer with whom those fierce words had passed on account of his rudeness to Rose Garfield. Septimius's fierce Indian blood stirred in him, and gave a murderous excitement.

"Ah, it is you!" said the young officer, with a haughty smile. "You meant, then, to take up with my hint of shooting at me from behind a hedge? This is better. Come, we have in the first place the great quarrel between me, a king's soldier, and you, a rebel; next our private affair, on account of yonder pretty girl. Come, let us take a shot on either score!"

The young officer was so handsome, so beautiful, in budding youth; there was such a free, gay petulance in his manner; there seemed so little of real evil in him; he put himself on equal ground with the rustic Septimius so generously, that the latter, often so morbid and sullen, never felt a greater kindness for a fellow-man, than at this moment for this youth.

"I have no enmity towards you," said he; "go in peace."

"No enmity!" replied the officer. "Then why were you here with your gun among the shrubbery? But I have a mind to do my first deed of arms on you; so, give up your weapon, and come with me as prisoner."

"A prisoner!" cried Septimius, that Indian fierceness that was in him arousing itself, and thrusting up its malign head like a snake. "Never! If you would have me, you must take my dead body."

"Ah, well, you have pluck in you, I see, only it needs a considerable stirring. Come, this is a good quarrel of ours. Let us fight it out. Stand where you are, and I will give the word of command. Now; ready, aim, fire!"

As the young officer spoke the three last words, in rapid succession, he and his antagonist brought their fire-locks to the shoulder, aimed and fired. Septimius felt, as it were, the sting of a gad-fly passing across his temple, as the Englishman's bullet grazed it; but, to his surprise and horror (for the whole thing scarcely seemed real to him), he saw the officer give a great start, drop his fusil, and stagger against

a tree, with his hand to his breast. He endeavoured to support himself erect, but failing in the effort, beckoned to Septimius.

"Come, my good friend," said he, with that playful, petulant smile flitting over his face again. "It is my first and last fight. Let me down as softly as you can on mother earth—the mother of both you and me—so we are brothers; and this may be a brotherly act, though it does not look so, nor feel so. Ah! that was a twinge indeed!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Septimius. "I had no thought of this, no malice towards you in the least!"

"Nor I towards you," said the young man. "It was boy's play, and the end of it is that I die a boy, instead of living for ever, as, perhaps, I otherwise might."

"Living for ever!" repeated Septimius, his attention arrested, even at that breathless moment, by words that rang so strangely on what had been his brooding thought.

"Yes; but I have lost my chance," said the young officer. Then, as Septimius helped him to lie against the little hillock of a decayed and buried stump, "Thank you; thank you. If you could only call back one of my comrades to hear my dying words. But I forgot. You have killed me, and they would take your life."

In truth, Septimius was so moved and so astonished, that he probably would have called back the young man's comrades, had it been possible; but marching at the swift rate of men in peril they had already gone far onward, in their passage among the shrubbery that had ceased to rustle behind them.

"Yes; I must die here!" said the young man, with a forlorn expression, as of a school-boy far away from home; "and nobody to see me now but you—who have killed me. Could you fetch me a drop of water? I have a great thirst."

Septimius, in a dream of horror and pity, rushed down the hill-side; the house was empty, for Aunt Keziah had gone for shelter and sympathy to some of the neighbours. He filled a jug with cold water, and hurried back to the hill-top, finding the young officer looking paler and more death-like within those few moments.

"I thank you, my enemy that was, my friend that is," murmured he, faintly smiling. "Methinks, next to the father and mother that gave us birth, the next most intimate relation must be with the man that slays us, who introduces us to the mysterious world to which this is but the portal. You and I are singularly connected, doubt it not, in the scenes of the unknown world."

"Oh, believe me," cried Septimius, "I grieve for you like a brother!"

"I see it, my dear friend," said the young officer, "and though my blood is on your hands, I forgive you freely, if there is anything to forgive. But I am dying, and have a few words to say, which you must hear. You have slain me in fair fight, and my spoils, according to the

rules and customs of warfare, belong to the victor. Hang up my sword and fusil over your chimney-place, and tell your children, twenty years hence, how they were won. My purse, keep it, or give it to the poor. There is something here, next my heart, which I would fain have sent to the address which I will give you."

Septimius, obeying his directions, took from his breast a miniature that hung round it; but, on examination, it proved that the bullet had passed directly through it, shattering the ivory, so that the woman's face it represented was quite destroyed.

"Ah! that is a pity," said the young man; and yet Septimius thought that there was something light and contemptuous mingled with the pathos in his tones. "Well, but send it—cause it to be transmitted, according to the address."

He gave Septimius, and made him take down on a tablet which he had about him, the name of a Hall in one of the Midland Counties of England.

"Ah, that old place," said he, "with its oaks and its lawn, and its park, and its Elizabethan gables! I little thought I should die here, so far away, in this barren Yankee land. Where will you bury me?"

As Septimius hesitated to answer, the young man continued. "I would like to have lain in the little old church at Whitnash, which comes up before me now, with its low, gray tower, and the old yew tree in front, hollow with age; and the village clustering about it, with its thatched houses. I would be loth to lie in one of your Yankee graveyards, for I have a distaste for them, though I love you, my slayer. Bury me here, on this very spot. A soldier lies best where he falls."

"Here, in secret?" exclaimed Septimius.

"Yes; there is no consecration in your Puritan burial-grounds," said the dying youth, some of that queer narrowness of English churchism coming into his mind. "So bury me here, in my soldier's dress. Ah! and my watch! I have done with time, and you, perhaps, have a long lease of it; so take it, not as spoil, but as my parting gift. And that reminds me of one other thing. Open that pocket-book which you have in your hand."

Septimius did so, and by the officer's direction, took from one of its compartments a folded paper, closely written in a crabbed hand; it was considerably worn in the outer folds, but not within. There was also a small silver key in the pocket-book.

"I leave it with you," said the officer; "it was given me by an uncle, a most learned man of science, who intended me great good by what he there wrote. Reap the profit, if you can. Sooth to say, I never read beyond the first lines of the paper."

Septimius was surprised or deeply impressed to see that through this paper, as well as through the miniature, had gone his fatal bullet,

straight through the midst—and some of the young man's blood, saturating his dress, had wet the paper all over. He hardly thought himself likely to obtain any good from what it had cost a human life, taken (however uncriminally) by his own hands, to obtain.

"Is there anything more that I can do for you?" asked he, with genuine sympathy and sorrow, as he knelt by his fallen foe's side.

"Nothing, nothing, I believe," said he. "There was one thing I might have confessed—if there were a holy man here, I might have confessed, and asked his prayers; for though I have lived few years, it has been long enough to do a great wrong. But I will try to pray in my secret soul. Turn my face towards the trunk of the tree; for I have taken my last look at the world. There, let me be now."

Septimius did as the young man requested, and then stood leaning against one of the neighbouring pines, watching his victim with a tender concern that made him feel as if the convulsive throes that passed through his frame were felt equally in his own. There was a murmuring from the youth's lips which seemed to Septimius swift, soft, and melancholy, like the voice of a child when it has some naughtiness to confess to its mother at bed-time; contrite, pleading, yet trusting. So it continued for a few minutes; then there was a sudden start and struggle, as if he were striving to rise; his eyes met those of Septimius with a wild, troubled gaze, but as the latter caught him in his arms, he was dead. Septimius laid the body softly down on the leaf-strewn earth, and tried, as he had heard was the custom with the dead, to compose the features distorted by the dying agony. He then flung himself on the ground at a little distance, and gave himself up to the reflections suggested by the strange occurrences of the last hour.

He had taken a human life; and however the circumstances might excuse him—might make the thing even something praiseworthy, and that would be called patriotic—still it was not at once that a fresh country youth could see anything but horror in the blood with which his hand was stained. It seemed so dreadful to have reduced this gay, animated, beautiful being to a lump of dead flesh for the flies to settle upon, and which in a few hours would begin to decay; which must be put forthwith into the earth, lest it should be a horror to men's eyes; that delicious beauty for woman to love; that strength and courage to make him famous among men—all come to nothing; all probabilities of life in one so gifted; the renown, the position, the pleasures, the profits, the keen ecstatic joy—this never could be made up—all ended quite; for the dark doubt descended upon Septimius, that, because of the very fitness that was in this youth to enjoy this world, so much the less chance was there of his being fit for any other world. What could it do for him there, this beautiful



grace and elegance of feature, where there was no form, nothing tangible nor visible? what good that readiness and aptness for associating with all created things, doing his part, acting, enjoying, when under the changed conditions of another state of being, all this adaptedness would fail? Had he been gifted with permanence on earth, there could not have been a more admirable creature than this young man; but as his fate had turned out, he was a mere grub, an illusion, something that Nature had held out in mockery, and then withdrawn. A weed might grow from his dust now; that little spot, on the barren hill-top, where he had desired to be buried, would be greener for some years to come, and that was all the difference. Septimius could not get beyond the earthiness; his feeling was as if, by an act of violence, he had for ever cut off a happy human existence. And such was his own love of life and clinging to it, peculiar to dark, sombre natures, and which lighter and gayer ones can never know—that he shuddered at his deed, and at himself, and could with difficulty bear to be alone with the corpse of his victim—trembled at the thought of turning his face towards him.

Yet he did so, because he could not endure the imagination that the dead youth was turning his eyes towards him as he lay; so he came and stood beside him, looking down into his white, upturned face. But it was wonderful! What a change had come over it since, only a few moments ago, he looked at that death-contorted countenance. Now there was a high and sweet expression upon it, of great joy and surprise, and yet a quietude diffused throughout, as if the peace being so very great, was what had surprised him. The expression was like a light gleaming and glowing within him. Septimius had often, at a certain space of time after sunset, looking westward, seen a living radiance in the sky—the last light of the dead day—that seemed just the counterpart of this death-light in the young man's face. It was as if the youth were just at the gate of heaven, which, swinging softly open, let the inconceivable glory of the blessed city shine upon his face, and kindle it up with gentle, undisturbing astonishment and purest joy. It was an expression contrived by God's Providence, to comfort; to overcome all the dark auguries that the physical ugliness of death inevitably creates, and to prove, by the divine glory on the face, that the ugliness is a delusion. It was as if the dead man himself showed his face out of the sky, with heaven's blessing on it, and bade the afflicted be of good cheer, and believe in immortality.

*(To be continued.)*



## THE LATEST TOURNAMENT :

### AN IDYLL OF THE QUEEN.

(RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO ALFRED TENNYSON, ESQ., POET LAUREATE.)

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BERNALET, whom the Irish for a joke  
Had made mock-knight of William's Table Round,  
At Westminster, within the gardens there,  
Skipt, snapt his fingers, chuckled, smoked his weed ;  
When to him, on the prandial side of noon,  
Sir Tyke, a something addle-headed knight,  
Hard-grain'd, dull-eyed, no genius, somewhat pale  
From thoughts of brickbats whirling round his head,  
Stept forth, and grasping in his dexter hand  
A Red Cap with a circlet labled "Guy,"  
Said, "Wherefore dost thou chuckle so, Sir Fool?"

For William and Sir Foster riding once  
Thro' England, with great Boblo in their rear  
Pricking full speed upon a bicycle,  
Saw on a doorstep, wailing in the wind,  
An infant, bare and red as Gloucester cheese :  
And William said, "Gadzooks, what child is this?"  
And when Sir Foster answered back, "Methinks  
'Tis *Ginx's Baby!*" the great William smiled ;  
But Boblo, hastening to them, cried, "Nay, nay,  
No Ginx's baby this, but bastard child  
Of that false Frenchman, that most caitiff knave,  
Sir Sans-Culotte, who, flying to his lair,  
Hath left this offspring to the wintry wind,  
For see it bears the Red Cap on its head  
Whereon is written the inscription 'Guy,'  
And round its neck a circlet with the word  
'Democracy,' and innocently it smiles  
In the wild tempest, quietly, a babe  
Not knowing its own mind;" and William took  
The babe, and in the arms of the great Queen  
Placed it an alien, and she smiled upon it,  
And named it by a new name "Loyalty;"  
But suddenly in spite of all her care  
It perish'd ; and the Fool's-cap left behind  
Vexed her with thought of its inglorious birth,  
And to the people's William with a sigh

## THE LATEST TOURNAMENT

She gave it, saying, "Take the cap of red,  
The fool's-cap take of the dead Loyalty,  
And give a joust and let thy knights contend,  
And let the circlet be his meed who wins."

Thereon a cry ran thro' the mighty land,  
And all the land was vocal like the sea,  
And in the empty hall of Westminster  
Expectancy sat like a crouching hound;  
And waited; and the knights put gaily on  
Armour of blue-books, ribs and helms of law,  
And weapon'd with the spears of sharp debate  
Waited, and the large hours rolled westward slow.

But, on the 'tother side of the great day  
Preceding that, or, less ambiguously,  
The morning just behind the day before,  
To Carlton House there stagger'd eagerly,  
With broken nose and one black jellied eye,  
His teeth knocked down to his œsophagus,  
His raiment rent, his face with filth besmear'd,  
A churl, to whom Sir William angrily,  
"My churl, for whom I've passed so many bills,  
What ails thee? who hath spoiled heaven's image here?"

Then, with his loose teeth rattling in his throat  
Like dice within a box, spluttered the churl,  
"O William, this maimed likeness thou dost see  
Is Codger's, his who many a day hath spent  
Waxing his thread and stitching shoes for men,  
And humming bitter songs to thy dispraise;  
And I have come from an accursed Hole  
Deep in the dark where damned duffers herd,  
Led by Red Bradawl that most bastard knight,  
Who, finding me too tedious and too fair,  
Logical, subtle, sticking to my last,  
And seeing that the Reading scum and scurf  
Had set upon me, lick'd me nigh to death,  
Mock'd, spat upon, and hounded me to Hell,  
Hath driven me loathing to thy presence, saying,  
'Go, with those stripes and bruises on thy nob,  
And tell the people's William we have raised  
A Table mightier than his Table Round,  
Tho' set within a pot-house, smear'd with beer,  
Dirty and stinking of tobacco fume;  
And whatsoever he and his have sworn,  
Good, bad, wrong, right, true, false, it matters not,  
We rougs have sworn precisely the reverse;

And tell him, O thou slowest of our horde,  
 Our Hole is full of duffers, like his House,  
 But ours are worthier, seeing they profess  
 The honest creed of duffers short of cash ;  
 And say, ours are adventurers, like his,  
 But ours are truer, seeing all the world  
 Knoweth their need ; and say, his hour is come,  
 The rowdies are upon him, his deep game  
 All up, and though he quotes my saws and songs,  
 Naught shall avail his cunning any more.' "

Then William said, " Dress this poor devil's wounds !  
 The rowdies raise their many heads once more,  
 Queen Mobbe sits famined by her factory fire,  
 The land is full of curs, lean Communists,  
 Mad atheists, watery spouters, men of lust,  
 Twaddle and Treason of one long embrace  
 Have borne the squalling bastard Anarchy,  
 And I conjure you, O my faithful knights,  
 Be firm, stick close, be constant, and strike home ;  
 And thou, Sir Foster, mightiest of my knights,  
 To-morrow sit enchain'd and judge the jousts,  
 Nor mingle with them, for it were not well  
 Thou shouldst contend with lesser than thyself."

And when the morning of the Tournament,  
 By Whig and Red and Tory named alike  
 The Tournament of the Dead Loyalty,  
 Brake forth, 'twas windy weather, and the hens  
 Ruffled their feathers round them in the cold ;  
 And forth the people streamed from street and lane,  
 The blind man and the cripple, old and young,  
 The penny-a-liner, and the wights who draw  
 Cuts for the papers called illustrated ;  
 And to his lofty seat Sir Foster moved,  
 And saw the ladies round him gaily dight,  
 And thousands in the colours of the Queen.

A costermonger's donkey from the midst  
 Brayed prelude, and all voices asinine  
 Re-echoed, with a roar from mouth to mouth ;  
 And in a sullen growl the row began,  
 And one by one the armed duffers dropt.  
 Sir Foster gazed with a sad-omen'd eye  
 And saw the laws of joust and tournament  
 All broken, heard the oaths and shallow lies,  
 The blasphemy of cowards in disguise  
 Against the fair fame of the stainless Queen ;

And more than once a stricken warrior shrieked  
 Cursing the people's William's gentle eyes ;  
 And once a teapot helm was cloven and showed  
 Fawceep—a narrow face ; and all at once  
 He heard the donkey bray most hideously,  
 And saw the ass's ears prick up like reeds,  
 And lo ! there entered, in a court-suit worn  
 Of late in humble motion to the Queen,  
 With gems and baubles all emblazoned,  
 (Given to his sire for services received  
 By liberal hands of perished Royalty,  
 Starr'd with the badge of Royal Commissioner  
 Liege to the glittering grounds of Kensington,  
 With one word "Baronet" written on his breast  
 Proudly paraded in the garish light—  
 A pigmy shape—Sir Tyke—just come post-haste  
 From preaching in the shambles and the slums  
 To ignorant heads, blind eyes, and famish'd mouths,  
 Sedition, treason, crown'd with one blind thrust  
 Against the gentle fame of the great Queen ;  
 And him Sir Foster knew, and longed to thrash,  
 But laugh'd to see the pigmy staggering  
 Under his breast-plate, much too big for him,  
 Helm'd with a pot and armed with his lance,  
 "Statistics," which at the first eager touch  
 Was shiver'd into splinters on his breast.  
 And Foster laugh'd and all the people laugh'd  
 In concert, and the donkey brayed once more ;  
 And not a knight of all within the lists  
 Could strike, but each, for laughter, held his sides,  
 And laugh'd and laugh'd, and all the assembly laugh'd,  
 And all cried, "Give the prize unto Sir Tyke !  
 For not a knight of all can hold his own  
 For laughter ! Give the boy his lollipop !  
 Give it, Sir Foster, he hath fairly won."

So Sir Tyke won, and him Sir Foster gave  
 The fool's-cap, with the proud inscription Guy,  
 Saying only, "Verily, brother, thou hast won  
 Take it and wear, but question thine own heart  
 If thou forsooth hast gain'd it honestly."  
 And he, Sir Tyke, made answer red with wrath :  
 "Thou tossest it to me too scornfully,  
 Yet think not I have failed to see, O knight,  
 Tho' thou stand'st fair with the democracy,  
 The great and growing love thou bear'st the Queen ;  
 Enough, farewell ! thou knowest what thou art,

Right arm of William in the field of fame ;  
Be happy in thy great Queen as I in mine."

Wherefore it came to pass that Bernalet,  
Chuckling the next day down by Westminster,  
Beheld Sir Tyke approaching, bearing proud  
The red cap and its circlet ; and Sir Tyke  
Cried loudly, " Wherefore dost thou chuckle, fool ? "  
And Bernalet puffed out a wreath of smoke,  
Saying, " Perchance to see thy chuckle-head !  
Or, possibly, because I find myself,  
Albeit the world hath deem'd me only fool,  
The wisest knight of all the Table Round."  
And Bernalet, still smoking, chuckled on.  
" I'faith," cried Tyke, and smiling, chuckled too,  
" Thou makest merry in thy heart to see  
How bravely I have won the tourney prize."  
But Bernalet grew somewhat grave and scowl'd,  
Saying, " I had rather sit with toads and frogs  
And croak in yonder Hole at Majesty,  
Than chuckle broken music like to thine,  
O chuckle-head ! " " What music ? " cried Sir Tyke,  
" What music have I broken, tell me, fool ? "  
And Bernalet, snapping his fingers, said,  
" The Queen's ! Whose name thou, sitting with Queen Mobbe  
Yonder among the slums of Newcastle,  
Yea, and at Bolton, where the brickbats flew,  
Blasphemedst to a low and sordid tune ! "  
Then cried Sir Tyke, " Would I might strangle thee ;  
Why do I stoop to reason with a fool ?  
But listen—reach thine ears—and I will sing ;  
And tell me if my notes be false or true."

" Free speech—free sneer—we strike because we may ;  
Her voice is husht, she cannot strike again ;  
The tune is loud ; hark how the donkeys bray—  
New gibes, new lies—we care not how they stain ;  
New dust, new mud, to cast from day to day,  
Old lies will do to dig from earth again ;  
Free speech—free sneer—we strike because we may."

He ceased, and cried, " Why hast thou stopt thine ears ?  
I made the song, and hold its music true."  
But Bernalet, with brow still darkening, cried,  
" Friend, dost thou mark yonder white-headed boy  
Making dirt pies without the garden rail ?  
And dost thou note his little dirty hands

Are naturally white as driven snow ?  
 And lo ! his little sister cometh near,  
 In pinafore most innocently clad,  
 Her face clean-shining from the morning scrub,  
 And straight at her he casteth mud and lies,  
 And laugheth, and the sweetling is defiled."

Then Tyke cried "Is the mud that I and mine  
 Cast, dirtier than thy jests have been, O fool ?"  
 And "Yea a thousand fold," the fool replied.

"Boy, I have wallow'd in the popular filth  
 Yonder among the swine at Waterford—  
 Yea, I have wallow'd, but at last am washed.  
 Out of the dry drugs of Democracy  
 I drank, but pish ! the taste was very mire,  
 'Twere well if thou wouldst wash thyself as well,  
 Or go in concert with thy brother swine,  
 Grunt wallowing that stale ditty I have heard  
 About the people's William—go thy way  
 And babble of him, and out of every sty  
 Echoes most loud will come to answer thee."

"Fool," said Sir Tyke, "why dost thou care to name  
 Great William : dost thou deem him fool like thee ?"  
 And Bernalet tossed away his weed and cried,  
 "Aye, by the rood a fool, the first of fools !  
 Believing he can make of thistles figs,  
 Men from mere swine, souls from splay-footed geese,  
 Truth-loving knights from mouldy fortune-hunters,  
 And liberal minds from underlings like thee.  
 A fool,—ay,—long live William, King of Fools !"

Then these twain parted, and Sir Tyke fared forth  
 Northward, and pricking thro' a lonely town,  
 He saw a widow sitting on a step  
 And weeping, and he asked "Why weepest thou ?"  
 And she replied, "Because my man was slain,  
 Victim he fell to that wild malcontent  
 Who goeth up and down the land in arms  
 Setting the foolish people by the ears  
 With quips and foolish words that make them mad."  
 And Tyke with features buried in his cloak  
 Rode musing : "Trouble grows. What an Queen Mobbe  
 Should learn to hate me ? That were dangerous.  
 Should love me over much ? That were a bore.  
 I would—I would not—nay in honest sooth  
 I know not if I would not or I would—  
 My bosom aches, and I am malcontent."

And mid the red blaze of a hundred fires,  
 With hollow clang of iron in her ears,  
 And dismal sounds like voices in a dream,  
 Queen Mobbe, the faithless mistress of King Bull,  
 Sat, clad from head to foot in crimson red,  
 Musing; and when the mite Sir Tyke approached  
 The giant queen, with mad and hungry eyes,  
 Rush'd out and met him, towering in the flare  
 Above the pallid pigmy at her feet,  
 And crying, "No, not John! don't say 'tis John!  
 But, nay, he never comes so jauntily.  
 My little one, hop-o'-my-thumb, my life,  
 Embrace me." And when the pigmy sought in vain  
 To girdle the great waist, she only laughed  
 And raised him as a babe in her twain arms,  
 Holding him trembling to her mighty lips,  
 Till in a flutter at her passionate eyes,  
 Sir Tyke cried, trembling wildly through and through,  
 "O, sweetest, let me down! Thou frightenest me!  
 Thou hast been drinking, and thine eyes are wild!"

Then with a hollow laugh and hiccup cried  
 The Queen, "He druv me to it, he—even John!  
 I hate his blunt speech and his decent ways,  
 His pride, and when I drinks he thrashes me;  
 And he has fulsome talk of 'rights' and 'law'  
 And 'duty,' and he hates all idle words.  
 Didst thou not meet him? O my pet, beware!  
 He hath a thousand ways to end thy life—  
 John's ways, my love, is sudden, swift, and sure,  
 Beware of him, beware his booted toe.  
 O sweet, my heart is full of hate for John,  
 And that's the reason why I dote on thee."

Then, taking him, her lover, in her lap,  
 And fixing him with one lack-lustre eye,  
 "Hast thou been faithful?" thickly asked the Queen;  
 "O boy, hast thou been faithful, tell me true?"

And he half sullen, pursing out his lips,  
 Said, "Pray the powers may take good care of thee  
 When thou art old and powerless, undertrod,  
 And love for thee no more is profitable"—  
 And she much anger'd screamed, "O recreant!  
 Dost thou look forward to so sad a time?  
 O sneak, slack courtesy forsooth is thine,—  
 The greater man the greater courtesy—  
 But thou, from herding ever with the swine,

## THE LATEST TOURNAMENT.

Morning and night, art swinish grown thyself.  
 Unsay the words : swear thou wilt love me ever.  
 Thy tongue is false : speak falsely : I'll believe."

Then Sir Tyke, kicking moodily, sucked his thumb.  
 "O bother! didst thou keep thy troth to John?  
 Swear to thee—verily, I have sworn enough;  
 And since I break mine oaths what use to swear?  
 I swore allegiance unto William once,  
 And seeing that, the churls of Chelsea straight  
 Elected me their knight; but, lo! how soon,  
 When I had gained mine end, I was forsworn.  
 Ay, once I honour'd William, kissed his feet,  
 And saw him raised on high with tight-drawn lips,  
 Weary lack-lustre eye, and peevish cheek,  
 A mighty man of pure and narrow mind,  
 High-soul'd and wholly ignorant of the world;  
 And all his followers lorded him as king,  
 And swollen with glory he did public deeds  
 Surpassing e'en himself, eclipsing all  
 In the white radiance of his pride and power;  
 And then the barbed tongue of scandal rose,  
 And round his feet sedition like a snake  
 Hissed stingless;—and I turned from him to thee,  
 Finding more comfort in thy wild great eyes  
 Than in the still face of the people's head.  
 Vows? vows? Bow-wows! Nothing I know of vows.  
 I am thy puppy, and my bark is this—  
 In politics we love but where we gain;  
 And therefore is my gain so large in thee,  
 Seeing that 'tis not bounded save by gain."

Then she with flashing eyes said gruffly, "Good!  
 Now what if I should turn away from thee  
 To some one thrice as noble as thyself;  
 For instance, to Sir Foster—he indeed,  
 The knightliest of all great William's knights—  
 Say that I loved *him*, would thou think it strange?"  
 But Sir Tyke smiled, and toying with her curls,  
 Cried wildly, "Let us liquor! Give me drink.  
 For being liquor'd, dearest, I will swear  
 Whate'er thou pleasest, and be fond for ever."

So setting her pigmy lover on his legs,  
 Queen Mobbe the mighty to the cupboard went,  
 And spread the board with regal gin and beer,  
 Pipes and tobacco; and she gravely lit



Her cutty, and her lover lit a clay,  
Gasping, red-eyed, because the smoke was strong ;  
And Mobbe cried, " This, now, I call sociable !  
Cheer up, my pretty, here's the sort of life  
We'll live together ! " And they ogling smoked,  
Now talking o'er the questions of the day,  
Now mocking at the thought of King John Bull,  
His great thick legs, his ribston-pippin face,  
His quivering paunch, his quick and crusty speech,  
Till Tyke, with pipe of clay held out at length,  
Cough'd, gasp'd, flush'd, choked, then cleared his throat and  
sang.

" Ay, ay, my eye—the winds that blow men higher !  
A place above, a muddy place below !  
Ay, ay, my eye—a place is my desire,  
And one is lost, and one is near I know ;  
Ay, ay, my eye—the winds that bring but ill !  
One way was clean, the other way is mire,  
And one is lost, and one I shrink from still.  
Ay, ay, my eye ! the wind I raised will blow ! "

Then as she kissed him, in his hand Sir Tyke  
Lifted the fool's-cap. " Ha ! " she smiling cried  
A little thickly, " do mine eyes behold,  
The sign of some new order which the Queen  
Hath for thy sake, my pretty one, devised ? "  
" Not so," he answered, " 'tis the cap of red,  
Wov'n of French hearts and dyed in human blood,  
Won by thy poppet in the tournament,  
And hither brought, a loving gift, to thee."

She stoop'd, he stood on tiptoe, and on her head  
Placed it ; and as he fell upon her neck,  
Kissed her, and drank her liquor-reeking breath,  
Behind them rose a shadow on the wall  
As of a plump top-booted yeoman's leg,  
Bent in the act to kick. " John's way ! " cried John,  
And kicked the screaming pigmy down the stairs.

That night came William home, and while he walked  
Through the dense darkness of the London fog,  
And heard the news-boys, hollow in the mist,  
Crying " Echo, Echo ! " like to hideous elves,  
Around his knees one clung and sobbed, and he  
Question'd, " What art thou ? " And a voice replied :  
" O William ! I am Bernalet the Fool !  
And I shall never make thee smile again."

## LITERARY LEGISLATORS.

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### I.—MR. DISRAELI.

THERE is no living man about whom so much nonsense has been talked as Mr. Disraeli. The nearest approach to an exception is Mr. John Stuart Mill; and the reason of the nonsense-speaking has been in both cases the same, namely, that the men have been found difficult to understand. The amount of misunderstanding criticism to which Mr. Mill, when in Parliament, was subjected was so great—it was such a degradation to a great name and fame to be so fingered and sniffed at—that it was quite a relief when Westminster, the queen of the constituencies, as *Punch* had entitled her, took the crown off her own head, and permitted Mr. Mill to retire to his study once more. With Mr. Disraeli no such result has arisen as any strong feeling of the kind that, in all sensitive minds (even of admirers), must have followed the degradation of Mr. Mill by the criticisms of utterly alien and often very thick, if powerful brains. It is long since the Tory leader was the subject of much savage criticism; indignant as Liberals naturally were when a Tory Government actually introduced a larger Reform Bill than that upon which they had turned the Liberal party out of office. Most people have “a sneaking regard” for the author of “*Vivian Grey*.” Years ago—say in 1854 and thereabouts,—there was a school of young Radicals who cherished an admiration of him which had, in my opinion, a demoralising effect upon their political faith. To read the way in which the late Mr. Washington Wilks\* and some other journalists whose names I could mention, bespattered Lord John Russell and flung bouquets of rhetorical homage at Mr. Disraeli was “a caution.” It did harm, as everything in which adventitious feeling is allowed to outrun the warrant of the judgment and conscience must do. This school of Radical Disraeli worshippers no longer exists, I believe; but probably it is still true that Mr. Disraeli has a greater number of intelligent admirers among the Liberal party, so-called, than among his own followers. Stories of a quasi-domestic character get abroad about him, and there is something in his relations with his wife, the Countess of Beaconsfield, which touches the hearts of most of us. I could say much upon this,

\* Mr. Wilks was a writer of far finer faculties than his career suggests, and he had an excuse which did not apply to others of the band in question; there was a touch of real genius in him, and he was liable to be “carried away” by genius in others, whatever shape it took. The bastard enthusiasm for Mr. Disraeli, which smaller men impudently set up as a foil to their equally bastard contempt of Lord John, was dishonourable and disgusting.

beginning with the well-known dedication of "Sybil," and coming down to a more recent date; but that I desire by every means in my power—and most earnestly do I invite all brethren of the pen to do likewise—to discredit and discourage the growing "personality" of our literature. To pass on, we all know Mr. Disraeli is a wit and a humourist, and we cannot help liking the man who makes us laugh. He is reputed to have spoken playfully of Mr. Gladstone as "a man without a single redeeming vice, sir!"—and who can forget that or help liking the speaker? Again, the instantaneous revenge which Mr. Disraeli took upon Mr. Beresford-Hope's banter about the Asian mystery has always appeared to me as one of the neatest things ever done in debate. The "Batavian grace" of the latter gentleman will surely live in such immortality as belongs to good things of the kind; and it is only one of a hundred similar things. Mr. Disraeli's novels are full, almost too full, of humorous epigram, and of humour in other shapes there is always an abundance. The wit is not pure (intellectually), and is not of the highest character—it is too often a trick of antithesis, with a point of departure that is personal; but the humour is of the best. The curious point is that the possessor of so much sense of comedy has not enough self-consciousness to keep him from occasional bathos.\* However, there is the humour, and Englishmen like it, though it is not wholly English in its quality (of which more by-and-by). Besides all this, it is perfectly certain, from his writings, that Mr. Disraeli knows the common people—a sort of knowledge which is sure to attract sympathy. Then, again, there is much to excite the admiration of most Englishmen in the fact that Mr. Disraeli has for so many years been fighting a losing battle. "How ever *does* he do it?" is the kind of question people are apt to put in such cases. There is, also, a strange and widely-spread though vague feeling that Mr. Disraeli is much of a deliberate and conscious charlatan in politics, and, of necessity under the circumstances, a very ingenious one. Now, whoever condemns Reynard the Fox, everybody feels a sneaking kindness for him; and the work of the world as it goes is so very largely carried on by humbug that there is an immense public, Liberal or not, which has a sincere

\* Sometimes, perhaps, in cases which *look* like bathos, there is in Mr. Disraeli a conscious twinkle of the eye—but not usually. It is very hard to decide on these matters. Pope has condemned as bathos Shakespeare's line in the mouth of Prospero:—

"The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance;"

and even Leigh Hunt has, delicately apprehensive as he was, acquiesced in the condemnation. But surely it is a mere piece of playfulness, which the occasion well warranted. Prospero is acting as showman to Miranda, and enjoys beforehand her wonder at the sight of Prince Ferdinand. I make a present of this suggestion to any Prospero who understands how to use by-play, against the next time the *Tempest* is produced. It was not till I was *told* that the line was bathos that that idea entered my head at all: it had always seemed to me a stroke of playful pomposity. See, however, Scene 2, Act iv.

sympathy with almost every kind of moral juggling (I have not said, and am not going to say, that Mr. Disraeli is a juggler). Lastly, there is a considerable class who think they see, or rather that they ought to see, something very deep and wise in the "theories," as they call them, of Mr. Disraeli. They are something like the creditors of Mr. Affable Hawk, in the *Game of Speculation* just before the real Sparrow ("it is Sparrow, I know him by his tail!") drives up to Hawk's door. "Very good, gentlemen, very good," says Hawk; "only you'll have to pay for the cab to the lock-up, and if you had only waited till to-morrow——," and then he looks pleasantly vindictive and oracular. "What does he mean?" says one of the creditors, wavering. "He must mean something," says another. In one way and another it has happened that our attention has long been attracted to Mr. Disraeli, and when the mind is detained for years around even a much more ungainly figure than his, it contracts a liking for the person in question. Of course, however, the liking so many people feel for Mr. Disraeli (who have not studied his writings) is not of the kind they feel for, say Mr. Henley—it is of that kind, not very deeply rooted, that depends upon interesting relations and long familiarity with the object.

With the nonsense to which I have referred as having been so plentifully talked about Mr. Disraeli every reader of newspapers and every man of the world are familiar. For example, we have been nauseated with chatter about his "sphinx-like" face. The only really smart thing ever said about that is Mr. William Black's remark that he "looks as if he were going to cry." But there is nothing particular in Mr. Disraeli's face in respect to unreadableness. The facial muscles are more than usually firm, and the lines of the countenance fixed; but the eyelids have the rapid mobility of the high nervous temperament—they respond instantly to any approach or touch (I do not mean a blow!) from without; and, for the rest, you have before you a very Jewish face indeed, of the kind you are not accustomed to read, and one in which lines which (I should say) are ancestral seem very strongly drawn.

Then, again, there is the still more silly trash about Mr. Disraeli's having risen from nothing to be Premier of England. There is something in this, and quite enough for Mr. Disraeli's fame; but it is utter nonsense to write of his having begun life as a solicitor's clerk, and then, as a friendless young adventurer, struggled upwards through poverty and one knows not what. I think I have seen some such language as that, when Mr. Disraeli wrote "*Ixion in Heaven*," he "snapped his fingers at the world in ragged bedevilment." What next? Mr. Disraeli was, from the first, "in society," to use the ordinary language; he had the highest culture of his day to start with; he had travelled; he had easy access to rich and influential people; he was never poor, in the true adventurer's sense of the

word (I speak, not from any knowledge of his purse, which is no business of anybody's, but from the nature of the case); and, in a word, granted his great capacities, there were no extraneous difficulties in his path, except his Hebrew descent. And there are two sides even to that question, for—again granting his great capacities—there was an element of fascination in it, as well as of repulsion. The story of the man's life and achievements is quite remarkable enough without any of this exaggerating and inconsistent twaddle. I venture to assert that the exact position of Mr. Disraeli would have been impossible to him if there had been any "ragged bedevilment" in the case. To pursue his precise career it was an absolutely essential antecedent condition that a man should be born a gentleman, should have culture and travel, should have the key to "society" within his easy reach if not in his grasp, and should not be poor in any such sense as would magnify the achievement of becoming a very prominent political figure.

In these few latter sentences we have come very close to what must form a leading point in any true criticism of Mr. Disraeli. Speaking, not with an eye to his personal habits—of which I know nothing, and of which, if I knew anything, I should be silent—but with an eye to his natural gifts, and the whole habits and methods of his mind, I say that the genius of Mr. Disraeli is primarily social, rather than political, and that it was from that characteristic that he took his point of departure in his political career. The instinct of the *tribe* is strong within him, and this, working amid the discordant conditions of English society, and with the accompanying attractions of his genius in other respects, has contributed largely to the results with which we are all familiar. His best books are essentially books of society; and his political thinking, and his political manipulation too, are those of the man of society, whose true *métier* is not politics in the larger English sense of the word. Take Mr. Gladstone—he is a politician to the backbone, and his theories and methods have—what shall I say?—I will use the phrase that was at the end of my pen, and say that his theories and methods have about them all the *free-hand drawing* of the born politician. They appeal "right away" to the ordinary large sources of political power; get all they can out of them; go as far as that will go, and there stop. At no time was there anything, so to speak, instinctively *tribal* (I am not thinking of caste) about his methods or ideas of a policy; anything of the trick or manner of a man of primarily social genius with a turn for "combinations,"—like or unlike Fakredeen's. With Mr. Disraeli all is different. Under any circumstances we can see that great social problems would have occupied his mind, and that political methods for solving them must have been taken into account by him. But how much depends upon the point of departure!

It may even be said that Mr. Disraeli has made politics more a study than Mr. Gladstone or any living actor in the political arena.

Nay, it may be added that he has treated politics more definitely as a science than any of them. Whately said of Mr. Gladstone that his mind was full of *culs-de-sac*. Now, there is of necessity one *cul-de-sac* in the mind of every politician whose mind is not exhaustively logical; but such a mind need not be, as Whately puts it, full of *culs-de-sac*. Nor is Mr. Disraeli's. Mr. Gladstone's is, or appears to be. You cannot fix upon his first postulates, and affiliate to them his whole political scheme, as you can Mr. Disraeli's. And yet Mr. Gladstone is, as we have said, primarily a politician or statesman, while the author of "Coningsby" is not. His political intelligence has a muscularity or grip about it which is wanting in Mr. Disraeli's. You will look in vain through Mr. Gladstone's speeches and writings for any such "categories" as you will find in those of Mr. Disraeli's, or any such antitheses. You will not find any analogue to the "Asian mystery;" or the "two nations;" or "the power of the Crown and the power of the Parliament;" nor will you find any such attempts to distil from history a political policy for to-day. It is Mr. Disraeli who is *artiste* and *philosophe*; it is he who has the advantage in point of intellectual consistency, and not Mr. Gladstone. Nor is the difference between the political fortunes of the two men accounted for by the indisputable fact that Mr. Gladstone has, by nature and habit, much the better grasp of those economic conditions with which every political actor has so heavily to count in these times. If Mr. Gladstone's budgets had been bad, then of course he would never have been where he is; and if Mr. Disraeli had been a master of finance, nobody can tell in this world of incessant fluking where *he* would have been. But, as Cleopatra said, "that's not it." The matter lies elsewhere. In spite of his dazzling career, we have most of us a suspicion, more or less conscious and intelligent, that history will ask concerning Mr. Disraeli, "Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?"—and this, too, even upon the supposition that all his social and political assumptions were true. There is not the least doubt that he long ago saw deeply into the condition of England question,—"*Sybil*" was published in 1845, and it is conclusive upon that point. But so does Mr. Ruskin, and yet no one would for a moment think of calling Mr. Ruskin a politician. His insight and his forecast are those of the social prophet, and his methods are those of the innovating enthusiast. I beg to be understood as never once using words ironically, disrespectfully, or obliquely in these sentences, but as meaning simply what I say—and the facts are as I have written. And, now, to return upon our steps a little, let us try and understand that Mr. Disraeli is, *fundamentally*, little more of a politician or statesman than Mr. Ruskin. He is infinitely more a man of the world and a *persifleur*; and he has all the natural flexibility of the humorist. He is intellectually as much a theocrat as Mr. Ruskin, and if his *faith* as a theocrat were as high-pitched he might leave as intense a mark as that with which

Mr. Ruskin burns his way, like a red-hot coulter, along the mind of his time. But the intense high-pitched faith we miss. The pitch of a man's faith is infallibly discerned in his methods. How much will you *stake* on a given moral forecast? that is the touchstone. In dealing with Mr. Disraeli, we never feel quite sure that he would not at any apparently unfavourable juncture endeavour—in the interest of Providence and his faith—to get a rise out of us. We are perfectly sincere in saying, in the interest of Providence and his faith; and we have no sinister reserve. The man who painted that terrible scene between Sybil and Stephen Morley, in which Sybil tears the mask off his selfish "love," *could not* be the man to endeavour to "get a rise" with any conscious obliquity of intent. But the man who drew, with such evident zest, Vivian Grey, Mr. Hatton, Fakredeen, Mr. Beckendorff, and other manipulators of men, might very well be the man to import the "arts" of society, of the *salon*, into modern politics. Especially would he do this, if he had studied in the now extinct school of the Talleyrands, Metternichs, and Palmerstons. And yet, unless he had the natural instinct which takes hold of ready-made power with a stark-naked grip and wields it "right-away" to its natural end, he would not really succeed as a politician. Except as a House of Commons man, and somewhat doubtfully even in that capacity, Mr. Disraeli has never shown any instinct for a direct use of power. It came natural to him, as a theocrat, with the tribal leaning, to look upon the aristocracy as a social hierarchy, and through them, to exercise a huge political influence—but that is quite a different matter. I do not for a moment believe—to change the instance—that Mr. Bright would ever have had any real grip of *direct* political power. He is, of course, immensely different from Mr. Disraeli, but he has, like him, the theoretical consistency which in Mr. Gladstone is not obvious; and he has wielded political power through the path of influence. Of course, too, he has been all along more in harmony with the strongest (risen or rising) currents of his time than Mr. Disraeli. But his methods never were and never could be strictly those of the politician. And it is his methods that must in such a case fix a man's ordination.

That Mr. Bright obtained immense influence in the country is, of course, due to the fact that he has all along been at one with the leading currents of his time. Mr. Disraeli, as we all know, has not; but even if he had been, it is improbable, he being otherwise the man he is, that he would ever have exercised as much influence as Mr. Bright. He would never be thoroughly *at home* in English politics, to begin with; and it seems impossible that this difficulty should ever have been overcome. That he is so much a humorist and always *artiste*, is also against him. The qualities that made Canning so brilliantly attractive to some people were dead against his success as a true politician; Sydney Smith never wrote too strong a word upon that point. A man of Mr. Disraeli's mould may well be, as indeed he has



always been, a distinguished political critic, and may, personally, get into the political currents, but it is another thing to have that natural instinct for grasping and wielding Thor's hammer, which makes your genuine politician, and we have already said that Mr. Disraeli has not that instinct. Plenty of the ambition which may be called political he has always had, and plenty of tact also; but both the tact and the ambition have been essentially of the *salon* and the tribe, and of course they did not change quality merely by being imported into the House of Commons.

The peculiar position of Mr. Disraeli as the long-experienced leader, or at least orator, of the country party, who has capped his career by making household suffrage the law of the land, is chiefly what puzzles most of those who cannot make sense of him, or believe in his sincerity. What might have happened if Peel had attached him to his ranks instead of leaving him out in the cold—a grievous practical blunder, no doubt—it is of course impossible to say; we might even have seen Mr. Disraeli helping Peel forward with the repeal of the Corn Laws, instead of torturing him, as we know he did, in certain memorable invectives. But is there anything in the whole career of the ex-premier which necessarily implies that he is, what so many people think him, a self-conscious political time-server? I think not. That he began life as what was then called a Radical is nothing. That he said his forte was sedition is, if possible, still less. The man who wrote those words, never, from “Vivian Grey” onwards, either was or could be politically at one with the main political tendencies of the last thirty years—I mean those tendencies which were in full force till a variety of causes (which have been touched elsewhere more than once by the hand which now holds the pen), whose *parliamentary* action was represented by the latter portion of the career of Palmerston, broke them up. For some time past, the “principles” which have been underlying nearly all political movement have been equivocal. Even the disestablishment of the Irish Church was not a triumph of Liberal *principle*, and compulsory State-education is at variance with every idea on which a scheme of Liberal politics could possibly be founded. There is no reason on earth why Democracy should be Liberal—that is, should have freedom for its policy. Of course it must leave all *feudal* ideas behind it, and look with disfavour upon privilege of every kind. But the set of the currents of public opinion has long been toward ideas which are essentially as Tory as the King of Dahomey; and, as Dogberry said, it will go near to be thought so shortly. If women get votes, we shall have at once a Despotie Democracy. The reader must be kind enough to take these as what they necessarily are—very rough indications indeed of my meaning. And the drift of them is this. Although we are sure that the country party did not want household suffrage, and though Mr. Disraeli, being supposed to lead the country



party, may have betrayed them into a "surrender" (he did so), it does not follow that he himself surrendered his sincerity, or any of his first postulates. He may have proposed to himself to make this daring bid for power for himself and his party, in the hope that he might "wield at will that fierce Democratic" for the ends which lay deeper down in his mind. And if British electors had been a little more clear-headed, and if the god Fluke were not so mighty in this world (or, which is the same thing, if he were a little mightier still), I am not sure that he might not have come sufficiently near to doing so to change considerably the aspect of affairs. The country party would have been what made his greatest difficulty—if the Irish Church question had not come to the front. He could never have "wielded" *them*, never have educated them up to the necessary point. But in household suffrage itself there is nothing which of necessity belies any of Mr. Disraeli's first principles. It is not necessarily opposed, for example, to the theocratic idea. Milton was a theocrat, though sometimes an illogical one, and yet he was a Republican. Mr. Disraeli's great quarrel with certain modern ideas as they have been worked in social and political life has been over and over again stated by him to be, that they have "destroyed the personality of man." In any theocrat this idea must rule; but, though Mr. Disraeli has always proclaimed his faith in our "Constitution" as it stands, and has maintained that the privilege of the Crown and the leadership of the aristocracy were, under the circumstances, the natural bulwarks of any successful embodiment of "the personality of man" (as he understands that idea) in politics, there is nothing in either one or the other to exclude even *universal* suffrage as a matter of principle. One can conceive Mr. Disraeli using his party to fling out another party which desired to extend the suffrage, and using for such a purpose the ordinary political tactics, and yet being ready to concede an extended suffrage as the price of power for himself—believing, as we must assume he did believe, that he had at his back political conceptions which it was at any cost desirable to work into the texture of our politics. The idea was wild—but what else did anybody expect from the author of "Tancred?" It is chiefly his sense of humour which has saved Mr. Disraeli from continuing to be what he began by being—a political laughing-stock. I do not mean (of course not) that he is made up of extravagant fancies, with humour just to keep him straight; but that his remarkable faculties, applied to politics, would never have produced even the results they *have* produced, if it had not been that his sense of humour kept guard over them, so to speak, and uttered the warnings which gave them the fairest chances that they could have.

I confess I could never see anything to laugh at in the "Asian mystery," and when Tancred, upon being told all about a new bishop at Manchester, replies, "Yes, but I want to see an angel at

Manchester,"—where, where is the joke?—I mean the ultimate, essential joke. For the joke that lay in Tancred's relation to his "set" and to the world in general, Mr. Disraeli saw better than most of the mockers could possibly do, and he embodied it, with very effective humour, in Lord Eskdale and in Lady Bertie-and-Bellair's ideas of getting to the Holy City. It is sometimes not easy for dull people to see how much of seriousness and how much of persiflage there is in Mr. Disraeli, but the inmost humour in such passages as those which describe the childhood of Devilsdust (in "Sybil") is, beyond question, tragedy and not mockery. Mr. Carlyle would scarcely have made the picture more grim. And it is clear, from first to last, that Mr. Disraeli has a deep sense—personally, I say a true sense, because I agree with him—of the natural indestructibility and necessary predominance (whatever may seem to threaten it) of the religious sentiment in man. This is as evident in the fine irony of "Lothair" as it is in "Tancred;" and it is linked with all his other beliefs and antipathies. His dislike of "Liberalism," for example, is exactly the same in kind as Dr. Newman's; stands affiliated to similar first principles, and runs out to similar issues. We must not expect a theocrat and lover of "the personality of man," who is also a humorist and man of the world, like Mr. Disraeli, to show in the same-coloured light as Dr. Newman, and there is something like irony in bringing the two men together on the same page. Yet what I have said is true; and Mr. Disraeli, "Lothair" notwithstanding, ought to be a Roman Catholic. That is the *logique* of his principles, whatever part he plays or has played. Readers who have not studied his books may remember a certain speech made by him—I think about four years ago—in which he said for substance that universal and absolutely inclusive religious toleration was inconsistent with the existence of an established religion. It is obviously true—the wonder is that the speaker did not see what the proposition carries with it. But then he is not singular in his blindness.

Trifles may go a long way in creating doubts of a man's earnestness, and perhaps nothing ever did more among cultivated people to disparage Mr. Disraeli's sincerity than the unfortunate Thiers-St. Cyr-Wellington speech of 1852, upon the death of the Duke. I have always clung to the belief that there was some very simple explanation of the plagiarism—some mistake made by a secretary, or perhaps by the orator himself in referring to a common-place book. What would have to be said upon the limits and the complexion of Mr. Disraeli's earnestness and honesty as a political person would, if we were to go into the subject at all, carry us farther than I think criticism of the kind ought to go, until long after a man's death. The usual practice in such matters is no guide for me, and I must follow my own conscience. But we have all of us been just learning a

lesson from what has been published since Lord Brougham's death, and Dickens's too (though the lesson in the last case has been overstrained); and we must try and bear it in mind in thinking of Mr. Disraeli and others. The fact that Mr. Disraeli is always *artiste*, by the necessity of his nature, has not been sufficiently recollected in criticising his political attitudes.

The vindictiveness of some of his utterances has always struck me with pain, and has occasionally seemed to exceed the license of either politics or literature; but then I am a bad judge of such matters, and have no experience of the exigencies of certain kinds of conflict. No one feels for Croker when he is led to the slaughter as Rigby in "Coningsby;" but the baiting of Peel was another matter. Yet in the "Life of Lord George Bentinck" there was an evident effort on Mr. Disraeli's part to be more than just to his ancient enemy. And we must remark that he was brought up in the midst of literary and political traditions very different from those of the last twenty years. Some of the passages in his novels, from "Vivian Grey" down to "Coningsby" and "Sybil," would now probably be made the subjects of action or indictment for libel.

It is not Mr. Disraeli's novels, but himself who is now under review, yet I am loth to close this little paper without laying before that mysterious "general reader" who reads so little and remembers so much less, a passage or two illustrative of Mr. Disraeli's humour. They shall both be from "Sybil," and the first shall be from that wonderful sketch of "The Temple"—a music-hall in the manufacturing districts:—

"A sharp waiter, with a keen eye on the entering guests, immediately saluted Gerard and his friend, with profuse offers of hospitality, insisting that they wanted much refreshment; that they were both very hungry and very thirsty; that, if not hungry, they should order something to drink that would give them an appetite; if not inclined to quaff, something to eat that would make them athirst. In the midst of these embarrassing attentions, he was pushed aside by his master with, 'There, go; hands wanted at the upper end; two American gentlemen from Lowell singing out for Sherry Cobler; don't know what it is; give them our bar mixture; if they complain, say it's the Mowbray slap-bang, and no mistake. Must have a name, Mr. Morley; name's everything; made the fortune of the Temple; if I had called it the Saloon, it never would have filled, and perhaps the magistrates never have granted a licence.'

"The speaker was a portly man, who had passed the maturity of manhood, but active as Harlequin. He had a well-favoured countenance; fair, good-humoured, but sly. He was dressed like the head butler of the London Tavern, and was particular as to his white waistcoats and black silk stockings, punctilious as to his knee-buckles, proud of his diamond pin; that is to say, when he officiated at the Temple.

"Your mistress told us we should find you here,' said Stephen, 'and that you wished to see us.'

"Plenty to tell you,' said their host, putting his finger to his nose. 'If information is wanted in this part of the world, I flatter myself— Come, Master Gerard, here's a table; what shall I call for? glass of the Mowbray slap-

bang? No better; the receipt has been in our family these fifty years. Mr. Morley, I know, won't join us. Did you say a cup of tea, Mr. Morley? Water—only water; well, that's strange. Boy, alive there! do you hear me call? Water wanted, glass of water for the Secretary of the Mowbray Temperance and Teetotal. Sing it out. I like titled company. Brush!

"And so you can give us some information about this——"

"Be back directly," exclaimed their host, darting off with a swift precision, that carried him through a labyrinth of tables without the slightest inconvenience to their occupiers. 'Beg pardon, Mr. Morley,' he said, sliding again into his chair; 'but saw one of the American gentlemen brandishing his bowie-knife against one of my waiters; called him Colonel; quieted him directly; a man of his rank brawling with a help; oh! no; not to be thought of; no squabbling here; licence in danger.' . . .

"In the meantime, we must not forget Dandy Mick and his two young friends, whom he had so generously offered to treat to the Temple.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Caroline of Harriet, in a whisper, as they entered the splendid apartment.

"It's just what I thought the Queen lived in," said Harriet; 'but, indeed, I'm all of a flutter.'

"Well, don't look as if you were," said her friend.

"Come along, gals," said Mick; 'who's afraid? Here, we'll sit down at this table. Now, what shall we have? Here, waiter; I say, waiter!'

"Yes, sir; yes, sir."

"Well, why don't you come when I call?" said Mick, with a consequential air. 'I have been hallooing these ten minutes. Couple of glasses of bar mixture for these ladies, and a go of gin for myself. And I say, waiter, stop, stop, don't be in such a deuced hurry; do you think folks can drink without eating?—sausages for three; and, damme, take care they are not burnt.'

"Yes, sir—directly, directly."

"That's the way to talk to these fellows," said Mick, with a self-satisfied air and perfectly repaid by the admiring gaze of his companions.

"It's pretty, Miss Harriet," said Mick, looking up at the ceiling with a careless, *nil admirari* glance.

"Oh! it is beautiful," said Harriet.

"You never were here before; it's the only place. That's the "Lady of the Lake,"" he added, pointing to a picture; 'I've seen her at the circus, with real water.'

"The hissing sausages, crowning a pile of mashed potatoes, were placed before them; the delicate rummers of the Mowbray slap-bang, for the girls; the more masculine pewter measure for their friend.

"Are the plates very hot?" said Mick.

"Very, sir."

"Hot plates half the battle," said Mick.

"Now, Caroline; here, Miss Harriet; don't take away your plate, wait for the mash; they mash their taters here very elegant."

"It was a happy and a merry party. Mick delighted to help his guests, and to drink their healths."

The other quotation shall be a scene from the account of the Chartist insurrection:—

"At this moment a great noise sounded without the room, the door was banged, there seemed a scuffling, some harsh high tones, the deprecatory voices of many waiters. The door was banged again, and this time flew open, while exclaiming in an insolent coarse voice, 'Don't tell me of your private rooms; who is master here, I should like to know?' there entered a very thick-set man,

rather under the middle size, with a brutal and grimy countenance, wearing the unbuttoned coat of a police sergeant conquered in fight, a cocked hat, with a white plume, which was also a trophy of war, a pair of leather breeches and topped boots, which from their antiquity had the appearance of being his authentic property. This was the leader and liberator of the people of England. He carried in his hand a large hammer, which he had never parted with during the whole of the insurrection; and, stopping when he had entered the room, and surveying its inmates with an air at once stupid and arrogant, recognising Field the Chartist, he hallooed out, 'I tell you I want him. He's my Lord Chancellor and Prime Minister, my head and principal Doggy; I can't go on without him. Well, what do you think?' he said, advancing to Field; 'here's a pretty go! They won't stop the works at the big country mill you were talking of. They won't, won't they? Is my word the law of the land or is it not? Have I given my commands that all labour shall cease till the Queen sends me a message that the Charter is established, and is a man who has a mill to shut his gates upon my forces, and pump upon my people with engines? There shall be fire for this water;' and so saying the Liberator sent his hammer with such force upon the table, that the plate and porcelain and accumulated luxuries of Mr. Hatton's breakfast perilously vibrated.

"We will inquire into this, sir," said Field, "and we will take the necessary steps."

"We will inquire into this, and we will take the necessary steps," said the Liberator, looking round with an air of pompous stupidity, and then, taking up some peaches, he began devouring them with considerable zest.

"Would the Liberator like to take some breakfast?" said Mr. Hatton.

The Liberator looked at his host with a glance of senseless intimidation, and then, as if not condescending to communicate directly with ordinary men, he uttered in a more subdued tone to the Chartist, these words, 'Glass of ale.'

"Ale was instantly ordered for the Liberator, who after a copious draught assumed a less menacing air, and smacking his lips, pushed aside the dishes, and sat down on the table swinging his legs."

In reading passages like these we must remember that Mr. Disraeli has told us in the preface to the novel that such scenes were drawn mainly from his own personal observation. And in estimating the man let us never forget what is implied in the fact that he has drawn two such noble figures as Sybil, in this novel, and Theodora in "Lothair." Nor let us forget the touch of really simple human feeling with which the sketch of Mick Radley and the two girls in the "Temple" closes; nor that Mr. Disraeli's humour (to which another reference was promised) has something very Spanish about it. Of his descent I know nothing; but this is true; and it does not follow that the humour is un-English, for the Spanish and the English humour have more points of affinity than the English and the French. Here, also, let us bear in mind that peculiar tendency to gorgeousness of description—evidently a thing of race—which sometimes provokes a smile from even the most plastic reader of this gentleman's novels. Undoubtedly we too often find in them that which is only grandiose instead of that which is truly magnificent or splendid. Yet there is always a touch of Oriental relish for ornament. People laughed at the jeweller's instruction about the pearls in "Lothair;" but there was something, a kind of fondling admiration

in them, that had a most natural ring. We may smile at Sidonia's letter to Adam Besso, bidding him let Tancred have as much gold, if he wanted it, as would make all the lions on the stairs of Solomon's throne; but what else should Sidonia have written? It was as natural as Eskdale's note of introduction. And the depth and sincerity of the Semitic predisposition in Mr. Disraeli are shown in the inexhaustibly numerous passages in which the Hebrew self-consciousness, or something born of it, comes into humorous collision with the "Christian" ideas of the average Englishman. For instance, in Eskdale's note to Tancred:—"I should tell you, as you are very fresh, that Sidonia is of the *Hebrew* race; so don't go on too much about the *Holy Sepulchre*." Or in the wonder of the two flunkies in the train of Tancred, as to where, if they should die in Syria, they would get "Christian burial in this heathen land." "I do miss the family prayers and the home-brewed."

Undoubtedly, however, owing to a want of recency in his culture from the scientific point of view, Mr. Disraeli has exposed himself to some ridicule in dealing with some modern ideas. Almost everybody, for example, has laughed at him for a certain speech, in which he was said to have taken the side of the "angels" against the side of the "monkeys." Personally, I think he has rightly seized the point at which all theories of bare evolution break down, and has conclusively proved in "Lothair" that he has done so; but his reading in such matters is not up to the mark; so, the baldness of his phrases betrays him when he meddles with them—betrays him, not to final absurdity, but to transient ridicule.

On the whole, the strictly *fair* political activity of Mr. Disraeli has left no positive mark upon his time; and we must attribute this to his alliance with the country party—an alliance which we cannot forbear to call strategical in, at least, its inception. The whole situation was difficult. To hate *laissez-faire*, and, above all, to hate a Liberalism which seemed to be essentially linked with a Manchesterised Church Establishment (as the Church of England appeared to him thirty years ago), was inevitable to a Hebrew in whom theocratic ideas were twisted at their roots with the tribal instinct. For such a man to endeavour to guide an aristocracy up to the political front was natural. But if this Syrian gipsy had staked more on his inspiration, and less on the combinations which he really seems to have set up for his own Fakredeen to make game of, he might—yes, he might, supposing he had gone into politics at all—have done much more than he has accomplished to maintain that peculiar inmost faith in "the personality of man" which belongs to the Semitic tradition, but which has been so wofully shaken of late years by the economic pressure from without.

HENRY HOLBEACH.

## CLIFT WINGS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GIDEON'S ROCK."

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THE most trying thing about Uncle Ted was his resemblance to his brother. It was sufficiently disagreeable to have an old man with tastes so low and habits so unpleasant fastened upon the family at all; but to see, and to know all saw, in this person the Leffler figure, and the Leffler features, and all the Leffler peculiarities to the very finger-nails, was a misfortune which demanded the whole of that fortitude of which the family motto boasted.

All attempts at reforming Uncle Ted had long since been abandoned. His brother, the doctor, had now grown accustomed to silence the complaints of his wife and children by half-reproachful reminders of that complete and final release which the whitening hair and battered frame seemed to prophesy was near at hand. No other comfort concerning the old man presented itself; and even this, suggested by his appearance and sometimes rambling mind, was made faint and doubtful by his good appetite, long walks, and early hours.

Uncle Ted had for years submitted himself to abject dependence on his brother. He could not work, he could not cope with strangers. Innumerable were the situations his brother had obtained for him, and the wardrobes Mrs. Leffler with willing fingers had prepared, and the departures that Uncle Ted had made; but swift had been the return on each occasion, pathetic the tale, irresistible the prayer to be allowed to stay.

The doctor continued his efforts from time to time; but, finding them always followed by the same results, and finding also that as the tall old form and noble-looking, half-vacant face grew more and more like his father's, it became more and more difficult for him to force him from under his roof. The doctor, therefore, had settled in his own mind and made the family aware he should not again seek a situation for Uncle Ted until he was compelled to place him in that from which return is impossible.

He was certainly a formidable incumbrance—one whom it was as impossible to conceal from society as it was to expect society to receive. Though his peculiar habits rendered it necessary for him to be banished from the room on the arrival of visitors, no one could be sure he would not come back for his snuffy pocket-handkerchief left lying on his niece's work-basket, or one of his enormous slippers dropped in his precipitate retreat, and in search of which all the ladies would have to rise, and turn about, and look under their chairs, while the doctor and Mrs. Leffler stood in sick, smiling



patience; and uncle bowed, and apologised, and uttered most absurd compliments, and made—as his nieces afterwards would declare—a “fearful exhibition” of himself.

Uncle Ted was full of admiration for these nieces, but they were scarcely able to appreciate his high opinion of them, their beauty, elegance, and accomplishments, since he was in the habit of confiding his opinion to the footman and the cook, who were kept well informed by him as to the conquests and matrimonial chances of the young ladies; and, indeed, as to most of the family affairs, private or otherwise, with which he might happen to become acquainted.

It was no longer of any use trying to keep him from talking to the servants. Who else could or would talk to him? His brother had done his utmost to frighten and persuade him out of the habit, had insisted on each member of the family devoting an hour a day to him, that he might not be driven to this extremity. But all was of no use. Uncle Ted was tiresome, and failed to keep his appointments. The young people were full of their own cares and pleasures, or rather of the pleasures which were their cares. The strong young wings wearied of trying to fly so low as this maimed and degraded old eagle; so they left it, and pursued their own bright flight.

Uncle Ted now, therefore, almost unhidden, carried his paper down to the kitchen every morning, and read leading articles to the cook, who without ceremony ordered him from place to place, to suit her convenience; while the housemaid would peep over his shoulder at the advertisements, and the footman sit on the table, discussing politics with him, undisguisedly patronising.

The doctor could do nothing but sigh helplessly as he, passing the kitchen stairs for a stroll in the garden, heard that fine old voice losing every day something of its nobility of tone, and that pure accent becoming so uncertain and vulgarised. Yet it would have been well for the family had Uncle Ted confined his friendship to his brother's servants solely. This, however, was not the case; for the doctor had more than once surprised him, before breakfast, standing on the step, leaning against the area railings—his scull-cap on the back of his head, his hands in the pockets of his old dressing-gown—asking the milkman's advice on some delicate family matter, hitherto supposed to have been a secret from Uncle Ted himself.

Led gently away by his brother's trembling arm, and sternly, yet entreatingly remonstrated with in the seclusion of the doctor's study, Uncle Ted defended his conduct on the score of the milkman's being a very remarkable man, a gentleman under a cloud, a person of considerable mental endowments; and the interview would be brought to an abrupt close by an earnest recommendation from Uncle Ted that his friend should be asked to dinner.

Among the nursemaids in the park, no less than amongst his brother's domestics and tradespeople, Mr. Edward Leffler was inces-



santly discovering some "highly-gifted mind," or some "fine nature," that demanded not only the devotion of his morning hours, during which he would sit in speechless or eloquent admiration of the "mind" or "nature" in question, usually to the embarrassment of its owner, and of some policeman or lifeguardsmen near at hand; but, unfortunately, too often demanded also homage, in the shape of a silver thimble, brooch, or ribbon, pilfered from the toilet table of one of Uncle Ted's nieces.

When the family went out of town, Uncle Ted was left behind. To carry such a disgrace among fresh scenes and servants was, of course, out of the question; yet the alternative was a serious one. In fact, it generally happened that, from the moment of the family's return to the moment of its departing again, fresh revelations were constantly being made concerning Uncle Ted's peculiar modes of passing this interval of separation from his relatives.

At first when the doctor, on opening one after another of his favourite books, found himself possessed by a strong inclination to sneeze, and traced this strange effect to its cause—namely, a few grains of brown powder sully nearly every page—he concluded that Uncle Ted had been devoting his time exclusively to study during the family's absence. Sundry odd volumes being missing from their places, and undiscoverable anywhere else, Uncle Ted's bed-room and favourite little retreats would be searched. As to the volumes themselves, the search would be in vain, but would result in the finding of mysterious little tickets bearing mention of the missing books and their whereabouts; and not of these alone, but bearing mention also of other little trifling articles and *their* whereabouts. Perhaps the whole amount which the exchange of the things mentioned on the tickets themselves had brought Uncle Ted would not be more than ten or twelve shillings. But the most alarming thought to the family was not, after all, the way by which the money had been obtained, but the way in which it had been spent.

Who could tell for what purpose it had gone? Perhaps in wooing to be Mrs. Edward Leffler, Mrs. Woods, the tobacconist, a widow with six children, and a person for whom Uncle Ted had confessed a feeling of no common friendship, through her likeness to a certain Lady Emily, his first love; or perhaps it had purchased a betrothal gift for Mrs. Webfoe, the charwoman, whom the master of the house was ever in fear of having introduced to him as his sister-in-law.

It cannot be supposed that the discovery of these tickets could be passed over as easily as Uncle Ted's other little eccentricities. A sense of unavoidable but useless duty compelled the doctor to summon his brother to his study, and endeavour to awaken in him some feelings of shame and penitence, but when, in obedience to his stern command, the tall form appeared, there was still so much of the old nobility about it that the doctor felt himself almost overcome with

shame at the accusation he had to bring against him, and his voice would tremble, as, pointing to the tickets on the table, he would say—

“Well, Edward, so it has come to *this*, has it, again !”

Uncle Ted, though seated in an attitude as dignified as his brother's, would gaze on the tickets with the expression of a child being chidden for a broken toy, and wondering timidly whether the fact of its being rendered useless ought not to be considered sufficient punishment, without further interference.

Sometimes when the doctor's words were more than usually stern and rousing, when his eloquence over the family honour came strongly, like the wind from mountain heights, to this poor fallen human eagle, he *was* stirred, would ruffle his feathers, and struggle to soar to where he had fallen from. His brother, pausing for want of breath, would gaze upon him with some hope, as he saw the thin figure draw itself suddenly up, as if stung, the long hand trembling and hurriedly stroking the long chin, the fine blue eyes kindling to something like horror as they rested on the tickets ; but the very next instant, catching sight of his brother's relenting eye, Uncle Ted would forget everything but the fact that he was about to be forgiven and set free, and the doctor saw that he had seized upon that thought with the joyous avidity of a child, though he still tried to keep the corners of his mouth drawn down, and an affectation of remorse in his eyes during the rest of the lecture.

When it was over, and the doctor looked after his retreating form, trying to cover its relief by a greater show of infirmity than usual, he sighed to think how useless it seemed even to point out to him a better state, since it was so impossible for him to reach it. Not only had fate so cast him down, but had taken away all by which he might ever hope to rise—had clipt the wings which in this world could surely never grow again. The poor eagle might ruffle its feathers and struggle, but never soar.

It did continue to struggle at times, even while its decadence went on so rapidly, when, while reading his paper, the housemaid, in her anxiety to hear of a more eligible situation, so far forgot herself as to lay her black-leaded fingers on his shoulder ; or when, in the heat of a political discussion, the footman addressed him by an opprobriously familiar name ; or when the cook, after the failure of repeated hints as to the kitchen fire being needed for other purposes than toasting the sole of his slipper by, dropped the poker accidentally on his foot ; on such occasions Uncle Ted was seen to change from his normal state. The half-startled, meditative look would come suddenly into his eyes, the long hand begin stroking the chin with quick, agitated fingers, the figure draw itself up, and make its retreat from the kitchen with a dignity that accorded but ludicrously with the set of the ragged and patched Indian dressing-gown, which had something

of the character of the garments worn by monkeys on barrel-organs.

These attempts at flight were very rare, and of brief duration. Before his friends in the kitchen had enjoyed his absence a quarter of an hour, Uncle Ted would probably be again amongst them, assisting the offending housemaid to shell peas, helping John to spell out a love-letter from the country, or bowing at cook's elbow with his newly-filled snuff-box, and the request—

"Madam, oblige me. I have desired Mrs. Woods to put in a little more rappee than Scotch on purpose to suit your taste. You *will* oblige me?"

The gravy or sauce of such a day usually seemed to suggest that cook had not spurned the prayer, though it might have happened she had not sufficiently recovered her temper to utter her accustomed magnanimous reply of—"Certingly, Mr. Edward, sir," while her huge thumb and finger filled his tiny box which he held towards her, perfectly concealing his dismay, not only at so much of its contents being covered by the finger and thumb, but at so much more being scattered around in their efforts to squeeze themselves out of the box again without losing a grain of what they had secured.

One day it was exceedingly desirable that Uncle Ted should be so disposed of as to leave no danger of his intrusion at a little dance to take place in honour of his eldest niece's engagement.

The task had been undertaken by Dr. Leffler at the tearful entreaties of his daughter, who, in consideration of the high birth and poetic temperament of her betrothed, implored that he might be spared the sight of Uncle Ted until a closer intimacy would allow of some explanation as to his condition.

The queen of the evening was Uncle Ted's special favourite and the object of his most intense admiration. Ever since he had heard of the engagement he had been in a state of wild anxiety to see the person for whom all those affairs of Sophy's, in which he had shown her such lively though inconvenient sympathy, had been brought to so sudden a termination. But though Uncle Ted rushed out into the area, and stared up every time he heard a carriage stop at the house, he had always as yet managed to miss *his* carriage; though he had paced the hall for half an hour when he knew him to be in the house and on the point of taking his departure, he had been always beguiled away before the moment came, and listened at a distance to the buoyant step and voice in indignant disappointment. He did at last obtain a sight of him through the keyhole, and spent some time there—rushing down every minute to confide to the servants his impressions of the bridegroom elect from this narrow point of view, then rushing back to it again. These impressions, unfortunately, were such as to make him more eager than ever for an introduction.

Countless pieces of paper were found about the house, the beginning of letters presenting "Mr. Edward Leffler's compliments to Captain Aldyce," and begging for an interview at Mrs. Woods', or at some other of Uncle Ted's choice resorts, at the captain's earliest convenience. These notes sadly alarmed Sophy, who felt sure the writer was waiting his opportunity to throw one into the captain's carriage, or have it delivered to him in the house, as perhaps it would be, in her own presence.

All his efforts failing, Uncle Ted had of late begun to give way a little to despondency. This had been brought on by a severe cold he had caught through waiting half an hour in the area on a foggy evening just to see the captain's carriage-lamps flash by. He had not been out for the last day or two, to the wonder of several small pensioners of his to whom he made a daily allowance of hardbake out of the little money with which the doctor ventured to trust him for his snuff. He had passed most of his time in the kitchen, had been rather more silent—"mopish," as cook expressed it—and altogether less sociable than usual, muttering, when asked what he would take to eat, some gloomy allusion to a dry crust, and snappishly offering, when asked where he would sit, to go to the coal-hole, if his doing so would afford anybody satisfaction.

Dr. Leffler found him seated by the fire, and his first glance at him led him to expect even more opposition to Sophy's wishes than he had anticipated.

"I'm sorry to hear your cold's worse, Edward," he said in a professional tone. "You must go to bed very early."

To his surprise Uncle Ted answered immediately—

"Yes, Theodore, I think I will go to bed early to night."

"I would, indeed, Edward," urged the doctor.

"I think I'll go now, Theodore," declared Uncle Ted, rising from his chair.

"Well, I really would," agreed the doctor, trying hard not to appear too much relieved.

He began to think, as he gave Uncle Ted his arm up the stairs, that he must have forgotten about the party altogether, but as he gave him over to John's care in the hall he was undeceived in this matter by Uncle Ted's observing quietly as he looked round at the camellias and lights—

"I should like to have seen Sophy when she's dressed."

"You shall do so," said the doctor. "Sophy shall run up and see you, only you must not trouble her about anything. She is over-excited, as it is; you must not add to her excitement by troubling her in any way."

"No, Theodore," answered Uncle Ted meekly, and after one dazed, lingering look at the lights and flowers, passed up the stairs with John.

He kept his word, for when Sophy went up to his little room at the top of the house, John carrying two candles before her, and her maid keeping her dress from touching the floor, Uncle Ted only raised himself on his elbow and gazed at her till the tears came into his eyes, then he lay down again, saying gently—

"Thank you, Sophy; I am much obleeged to you, Sophy. I haven't excited you, have I, Sophy? Tell your father I have not excited you, my darling."

Sophy assured him with a conscience-smitten tenderness, and, throwing him a flower out of her bouquet, and curtsying with mock solemnity at the door of his little room, left him by himself.

Cook had promised to send him up some gruel, but forgot all about it, and he lay in the dark listening to the music, and thinking of his darling, all loveliness and love, floating among the lights and flowers, and of the bright young conqueror, whom he was not allowed to see.

After lying so long a time, he heard John bounding up the stairs to take a peep at himself before attending at supper.

Uncle Ted called to him, but he tripped down again, calling back carelessly—

"Can't stop now, Mr. Hedward. Just a-going into supper. Lie down and keep warm now, or we shall be a-having brunkeetis set in. Be up directly. *Have reware.*"

It was about half an hour past midnight when John whispered something to Dr. Lefler that caused him to go out of the room, and go straight up to Uncle Ted's attic.

The doctor sat down on the edge of his brother's bed, scarcely knowing for a moment or two what it was which had so shaken him—his sudden ascent of the stairs, the sight of Uncle Ted's face, or the weak cry with which he had greeted him.

"Theodore, I will see him—I've a *right* to see him."

"Be quiet, Edward; you shall see whom you like; but don't excite yourself. What is the matter? Have you been alone long?"

The quiet, authoritative, professional tone and manner had some effect. Uncle Ted became a little calmer.

The doctor gave John some directions, sent him down-stairs, made an alteration in the arrangements of the pillows, then sat down again and felt his brother's pulse.

"Theodore."

"Don't talk, Edward; don't talk just now," said the doctor; "presently will do."

"No, it won't, Theodore. I want to tell you something."

"Well, if it will relieve you. But you must be very quiet."

"Theodore, the night father died—you know I was alone, taking care of the house—me and Mrs. Webfoe. I was out when they brought him home in the fit; I was taking a cup of tea at a friend's

—excellent woman, Theodore—perfect lady, though reduced to a mangle."

"Don't excite yourself, Edward, pray," said the doctor, beginning to have appalling forebodings as to the actual existence, after all, of the long-dreaded sister-in-law. "Well?"

"We had conversed on the subject of your quarrel with poor father, and she joked me about being likely to have all if he should die before you made it up, and said that people *did* say he had a will made in my favour. Then they fetched me, Theodore—Mrs. Webfoe came in a cab for me."

"Now you *are* exciting yourself, Edward."

"Theodore, he *did* have a will, leaving all to me; he put into my own hands—this—this——"

"Be quiet; pray be quiet," said the doctor, half dreamily, keeping one of his brother's hands as he took the thing they thrust into his.

He was almost startled out of his usual inscrutable pulse-feeling expression. How great and sudden a change must have come to the poor weak isolated mind—all unnoticed—for such an idea to have found place and conviction in it! At that moment a recollection of his brother's manner when he had returned home after his father's sudden death, caused the doctor to think over the words he had just heard in an entirely different spirit.

After sitting looking into his face a minute, he got up slowly and went to the candle with the paper Uncle Ted had given him. There was no mistaking it for the very same whose reported existence twelve years ago had filled his heart with misgiving and bitterness.

"What made you do this, Edward? How could you receive me as owner of all, and remain yourself almost—God forgive me!—almost penniless? How could you, Edward?"

"Was I fit to be anything but almost penniless, Theodore?"

"But why not have told me—have shared it with me equally?" asked the doctor, with almost passionate reproach.

Uncle Ted sighed and shook his head.

"Ask your own spirit"—he said "*sperit*," in imitation of cook—"ask your own spirit, Theodore. You know as well as I do, you would almost have cursed your poor father, Theodore—you know you would—and let your children starve, rather than let them touch a penny of his money so left. Ah, *I* knew you, Theodore—I knew you. I knew it must be all or nothing. I say to myself, What am I? I only want to see the children happy, and find a home amongst 'em. And I *have* found a home, and been a turrable trial to you, Theodore; but it won't be for long—I feel it won't be for long, Theodore."

The doctor sat with his face buried in his hands. The story had not startled him. He knew that such an act was simply natural to Uncle Ted. There had not been the slightest heroism about it; it

had been his *easiest* course, and therefore the one most pleasant to him.

"But, Theodore, you wouldn't always let me see you happy. Sophy won't let me see her happy; she won't let me see young Aldyce. It's *too* bad, that is, Theodore."

"I will fetch them," said the doctor huskily; "they shall both come up."

"Stop, Theodore," cried Uncle Ted, with a vehemence that left him breathless.

When the doctor reached the bedside, he had turned his cheek to the pillow, and closed his eyes.

"Don't call 'em," he said faintly. "I like to hear the music, and to think they're happy. Don't make 'em leave off for me. I'd rather not see *him* now. I won't have her made to leave off dancing, and set a-crying with her happy eyes. Not to-night, Theodore. Let her dance; let her be happy. Bless her!"

After watching by him some little time, Dr. Leffler ventured to disobey the master of the house so far as to summon his relatives and Captain Aldyce to his bedside.

Uncle Ted was so favourably impressed by Sophy's choice, that he left him a verbal introduction to carry to his special friend the policeman, lodging at Mrs. Woods', whose acquaintance he strongly advised the captain to cultivate.

He passed away at seven o'clock in the morning, in the presence of all he loved, and looked on by a landing full of honestly-regretful eyes.

The Indian dressing-gown was bequeathed to Captain Aldyce, and now serves as a nursery divan, the bright colours of which baby hands pat adoringly. The slippers were left to cook, their owner having observed, he said, that she had a Cleopatra foot. The snuff-box had so many claimants that the doctor, to settle the matter, decided to retain it in his own possession.

KATHERINE SAUNDERS.



## AMONG THE HEBRIDES.

BY AN IDLE VOYAGER.

### I.—A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW FROM BEN EVAL.

LEAVE the great city and its dusky waves, which break with the sullen roar of a sea ; forget London, forget Paris, forget even the tourist-haunted vales and hills of Switzerland, pass from nooks reached by the prattling newspaper and the last new novel, and from drawing-rooms fluttering with the last new poet ; shake off your feet the dust of ordinary life, and putting on the soul's seven-league boots, fly northward : through the green English counties, over the dark manufacturing towns, across the border, past the braes of Yarrow and St. Mary's Loch, in and out of the city of abominations on the banks of the Clyde, among the fair scenes haunted every summer by smiling tourists and jolly undergraduates—onward still, and northward—not pausing till you have left behind every trace of civilization, and are standing on the basaltic cliffs of Skye. Pausing there, breathe for one moment the perfect sense of solitude ; see the mighty waters of the Minch and the Atlantic breaking troublously around you, while mountain upon mountain rises solemnly on every side of you, and the rain-cloud, scarfed by a prismatic rainbow, pauses above you ; and then look westward, far out into the sea, where, like a monstrous serpent crawling northward, and dimly distinguishable in the weltering waste of water, the Hebrides stretch in utter loneliness, visited by no passing ship, and holding scarce any communication with the world of man. Then, after you have realised the grey desolation from afar, suffer us to wrap you in our Asmodean mantle and fly with you across the thirty miles of water, not pausing till we have set you down on the very summit of Ben Eval, a lonely mountain rising in the midst of these far-off Isles of the Sea.

Now, look round you ! It is one of those dark, dim days which occur here five out of every seven days in the week ; and you have above your head not the soft blue of southern climates, but the sombre, beautiful grey of the vapour or under-heaven. The air is full of light : not golden, not yellow and dazzling, not suffusing, but strange silvern light, such as we sometimes see in human eyes. Gazing on what is below you, do you tremble and hush yourself unconsciously ? or is your first impression that of repulsion or displeasure ? What do you see ? First, on every hand, the Sea, with its unrest that will never be comforted. Then, close beneath you, tracts of green land, rising into purple knolls, broken with gigantic



boulders, and so intersected and broken up with sea-fjörds, fresh-water lakes, stagnant lochans, and water in all shapes and forms, that the land seems floating land,—patches of green drifting on the ocean. Far away southward it stretches, till it mingles with the cloud of the ocean, and far up northward, till it rises into the high mountains of Lewis.

Colourless, dreary, silent, homeless, sea-courted, sea-surrounded, a dark mass of mingled land and water, where even the men and women (you fancy) must be amphibious—such is the prospect; and why, you ask us, have we brought you to look upon anything so cheerless? Why have we brought you hither, instead of keeping you to the happy dales of English pastoral tale, and the charming scenes of romantic fiction? Why have we wafted you to a cold wilderness, where even the Black Forest would appeal to your heart with more picturesqueness, and the slopes of the sierras of Colorado be more abundant in interesting forms of life? Our answer is very simple. You know these scenes well, in fact or on paper; but this scene you do not know—nor are you likely to know it until you love it; and it is with the hope of awakening some faint feeling akin to love—some gentle tenderness for what is so lonely and so uninteresting at first sight—that we have brought you hither.

Wander down into the valleys, pass from island to island, from lake to lake. Is all flat and unprofitable still? Look at that rainbow, staining the damp green land through and through, and arching up into the gentle cloud, while—see!—its ghost, lovelier still, palpitates beneath it with one bright foot in the sea, which streams around it green as emerald. Here is a lochan; how ugly it looked at a little distance! and yet it is a perfect nest of loveliness, with its yellow and white lilies, its bright floating leaves, its silvern, leaping trout, its glorious dragon-flies. Where are you now? Ah, on the verge of the Black Lake,—miles long, and so shallow that the rocks of the bottom jut everywhere above the surface. In its centre a vitrified tower stares like a ghost through the swathing mist. What a whirr of wings! The wild geese, multitudinous as leaves in Vallambrosa, are rising in one white cloud, till they vanish into the sky. Now you pass over to the western coast, and wander on the sands. You scoop the sands in your hand, and find that they are powdered crustacea, with here and there a tiny shell “fairly fair,” glittering like mother-of-pearl. Have you seen nothing lovable yet?

If you are superstitious you will find every prospect haunted. There are serpents in all the waters, with sharp teeth and backs like saws, and there are mermaids on the sea-sands. On the bottom of the great fresh lakes walks the water-bull, waiting to devour the unwary bather, and only to be caught by human flesh on a hook as big as the fluke of an anchor. A hare runs past your feet, but it is useless to shoot at it without a silver bullet; for it is a witch.

Still impatient? still incredulous? Yes, you exclaim, for these things do not move your heart. The world is very beautiful even in a spot like this; and superstition is very strange. Worn with hollow forms and thoughts, you seek something more—you seek living beating hearts, throbbing against your own in strange sympathy, and awakening there tenderness of the soul which has been sleeping long. Wherefore bring you to a wilderness? It can teach you nothing, you say; one touch of human nature strikes deeper than all. And you prepare to fly.

Stay! it is precisely for that one winning touch that we have brought you hither. Yes, hither, to the lonely waste. There are lives growing in this lonely soil, flowers of strange beauty, souls as dear to God as your own or any soul in the vast earth. A wilderness? Stand on the summit of Ben Eval and look again!

For a long time, strain your eyes as you may, you perceive no sign of humanity. Slowly as the details of the prospect grow upon your perception, you notice yonder on the western coast, where the sandy knolls are washed by the Atlantic surge, faint yellow gleams as of growing corn, the bright emerald green of the potato, and—yes!—that is the blue peat smoke rising from a tiny hamlet in the hollow. Then, as your eye wanders along the islands and promontories, and you perceive how richly purple they are wherever the sea kisses them, you will see the thick blue smoke of the peat fire drifting along before the wind, and behold the dark figures of the kelp-makers darting to and fro amid the smoke, and feeding the fire with the black and slippery weed. Yes, and what is that gleaming afar, away on the green line where ocean and land meet? It is a spire. And now you know that the white thing in the hollow yonder, small as a pocket-handkerchief, is a house—perhaps the priest's dwelling or the minister's manse. Then there are souls to save here as in the great world, sheep that need the shepherd—such a one as the world sends them. Though the human flock is every day growing fewer and fewer here as elsewhere, to make way for veritable sheep and cattle on four feet, the isles are not quite barren of humanity. In the lonely bays of the sea-lochs, in the green hollows of the hills, among the sand-knolls of the west coast, there are human habitations. Here and there you will see a prosperous white farm abounding in sheep and cattle, and surrounded by well-tilled fields. Scattered in unsuspected corners are hamlets—groups of mud-huts, rudely thatched, with little patches of corn hard by, and picturesque fishing clachans, with strong red-sailed skiffs and drying nets on the beach before them.

Note further, that at first sight this life repels you. You miss the bright eye and the plump cheek, the cheery crackle of the carter's whip, the cry of the village school, the clink of the blacksmith's shop, all the conventional attractions of the English village; and you miss

equally the merry horn of the Swiss herdsman, and the picturesque costume of the German forester. The people here live in wretched huts, wear an unpicturesque costume, speak a barbarous tongue, and never seem to smile. They are stupid perhaps, you think, forgetting how stupid you yourself with your modern ways and foreign tongue may look to them.

Well, know them better, touch, feel, make sure they are human like yourself,—possibly better than yourself in much that makes human creatures dear to God. Who are you? Pretty girl, or fine lady, or dandy, or merchant, or city clerk, or painter, or analytical poet? Possibly you think your human horizon inexhaustible because it includes the last new music from Vienna or Paris, the latest scandal, the latest fashion, the state of the money market, the many good and bad forms of life in big cities, the exhibition of the Royal Academy, and Browning's rehabilitation of a Greek torso. It may be so, or it may be only illusion. Possibly enough your horizon embraces no more of life absolute than that seen by these islanders, who live in mud huts and are at the mercy of all the winds that blow. To live, to love and be loved, to be conscious of the sky and the sea and of living creatures under them, to wonder and to tremble, to watch the tide of to-day wash out the footprint of yesterday—is not this to live? Reflect for a moment and ask yourself how much of your so-called knowledge of life is real knowledge, how much of your fancied life real living. Do you know more than these people? Do you feel as much? Do you see as vividly?

## II.—NIGHT ON LOCH URIBOL.

It is a summer night; and we are lying in the stern of a fishing-skiff, rowed by two stalwart boatmen. As we glide along under the black shadow of the hills, one of the men is crooning to himself, in a low sort of undertone, a weird Highland melody—one of those exquisitely beautiful tunes which are half a recitative, half a melody,—oratory set to cadence and sparkling into music just as a fountain tops itself with spray. The ditty he is singing may be rendered into English words as follows, but no translation can convey the deep pathos and subtle sweetness of the original:—

“O mar tha mi! 'tis the wind that's blowing,  
 O mar tha mi! 'tis the sea that's white.  
 'Tis my own brave boatman was up and going  
 From Uist to Barra at dead of night.  
 Body of black and wings of red  
 His boat went out on the stormy sea.  
 O mar tha mi! can I sleep in my bed?  
 O gillie dubh! come back to me!

“O mar tha mi! is it weed out yonder?  
 O is it weed or a tangled sail?  
 On the shore I wait and watch and wander.  
 It's calm this day, but my heart is pale.

O this is the skiff with wings so red,  
 And it floats upturned on the glassy sea.  
 O mar tha mi! is my boatman dead?  
 O gillie dubh! come back to me!

"O mar tha mi! 'tis a corpse that's sleeping,  
 Floating there on the weeds and sand;  
 His face is drawn and his locks are dreeping,  
 His arms are stiff and he's clenched his hands.  
 Turn him up on his sandy bed,  
 Clean his face from the weed o' the sea.  
 O mar tha mi! 'tis my boatman dead!  
 O gillie dubh! won't you look at me?"

"O mar tha mi! 'tis my love that's taken!  
 O mar tha mi! I am left forlorn!  
 He'll never kiss and he'll never waken,  
 He'll never look on the babe unborn.  
 His blood is water, his heart is lead,  
 He's dead and slain by the cruel sea.  
 O mar tha mi! I am lone in my bed,  
 My gillie dubh is away from me!"

As he sings, keeping time with his oars to the melancholy burthen, the summer moon begins to cast a ghostly gleam behind the mountains, and suddenly it arises above the lake—yellow, round, and bright, suffusing the surface of the lake with its rays. Through the ambient darkness glides the boat. All is still as death, save for the sound of the oar, the wild scream of the curlew flitting from one ghostly bay to another, and the faint far-off sound of the sea-birds feeding on the black shores of the fjörd.

Loch Uribol, whose lonely waters we are navigating, is one of the wildest of the strange sea-fjörds which everywhere intersect the Hebrides on the eastern side: vast narrow arms of the sea, bearing, in their innumerable ramifications this way and that, a certain resemblance to an outspread piece of sea-tangle, the main stalk representing the main fjörd, and the numberless twisted stalks and leaves spreading to left and right representing the numberless bays, creeks, and minor fjörds, which spread on either side. A boatman rowing straight up Loch Uribol, and perfectly familiar with the water, would reach the head after rowing about ten miles; but a stranger, attempting to perform the same feat, would wander from left to right, this way and that, ever mistaking some false opening for the real passage, until he would abandon the navigation in despair. Seen from the heights of Ben Ruadh, or the Red Hill, which rises above the fjörd on the north, Loch Uribol seems a wandering arm of water, broken by innumerable points, coves, green islets, and savage rocks, and so creeping in and out of the land that its course is very difficult to distinguish from those of the many fresh-water lakes and lakelets which surround it on every side. Beginning on the eastern

coast, where it is fed by the wild waters of the Minch, it flows in and in, and round and round, till it comes within a few miles of the western coast, where it pauses, fed by a wild stream, which is fed in its turn by a marshy and shallow lake of brackish water; and this last lake, Loch Monadh by name, stretches on to within a quarter of a mile of the Atlantic Ocean, with which it appears to communicate mysteriously underground.

It is difficult to convey to a stranger's mind the utter loneliness and desolation of the whole landscape of which Loch Uribol forms a part. Wild weltering arms of sea-water with deep red stains and blotches of outlying weed; flat, green, unwholesome islands strewn with sickly greystone; vast stretches of low moorland, broken by white gleams of fresh-water lochans, whence the wild sea-ducks arise with a startled cry; larger fresh-water lochs, very shallow and black, with gigantic boulders and crags rising out of them like jagged teeth; the higher hills, purple with heather at the base and middle, but rising abruptly into peaks of lurid granite: such are some of the features which strike the eye where nothing is seen save in detail, where there is no general effect save that of a map, or of the sea in storm as seen from a mountain. The prevailing tone of all is a dreamy grey—the grey of the rain-cloud which, floating hither over the Atlantic, breaks here into dark vapour and wreaths of wool-white mist. All is still, solemn, colourless, save where the sun transforms all into wondrous brightness; save where the thunder-storm bursts, with its bright purple voids and forked crimson lights; save where the rainbow, here glittering with all the hues of the prism, starts out of the sea like a spirit, and where, as if in answer to a spell, rainbows innumerable issue out of the low-lying vapours and spread themselves glittering over the isles. On every side stretches the sea, with its restless voices: to the east the Minch, with a far-off view of misty Skye; to the west, the Atlantic Ocean, thundering on open sands as ghastly in tint as a dead man's face. The habitations of man are few, and scattered in the most lonely and unexpected recesses. At a first approach, there is scarcely a sign of humanity, unless indeed the red-sailed fishing-skiff be crawling out to the lobster bed in the sea, or the smoke of the heather fire be rising from the sides of the solitary hill.

Night, which beautifies and spiritualises all earthly things and scenes, is lovely on Loch Uribol; and the wild mingled outlines of land and water grow terribly pathetic in the silvern light of the moon and the fluttering phosphorescence of the aurora. As we creep along up the fjörd in our boat, hearkening to the solitary song, the prospect changes around us as in some fairy tale. Round dusky points where the cormorants flutter their wings and preen their plumage in the moon; through shallow bays with sandy shores, whereon the heron stalks like a ghost, knee-deep, with his black

shadow in the silvern pool, and where the mirrored stars are as drops of pearls in the shimmering tide; through narrow black passages where the sea-pigs are floundering with unearthly noises.

The dark scene around us is full of life. A thousand sounds hushed by day break the midnight stillness. This solitude can scarcely be called lonely, unless life itself be loneliness.

### III.—THE FAIR AT STORPORT.

Fifteen miles from Uribol, as you sail southward along the coast, opens Loch Storport, and at the head of the lake stands the town, or village, or clachan, of Storport, consisting of a public-house, a shed for dried fish, and five or six mud huts clustering round a white-washed school. Some miles in the interior are churches of various denominations, Protestant and Roman Catholic—desolate-looking edifices in the midst of a desolate country. Indeed, a more cheerless prospect than Storport and the country surrounding it can scarcely be conceived—a flat, green, marshy district, broken up with innumerable lakes and tarns, and rising only occasionally into small hills. It is a walk of only five miles from Storport on the eastern coast to the white sands of the western coast, where the surge of the Atlantic thunders for ever.

The broken-down-looking inn of Storport, a one-story edifice without "sign" of any sort, stands at the head of a large pier or wharf, and for nine months out of ten stares with two glazed and fishy-looking eyes at the cheerless waters, broken with damp green islands, projecting reefs, and floating weed. The landlord wanders away wherever business or pleasure leads him, and a dirty servant roams to and fro through rooms innocent of the taste of whiskey or the smell of smoke. But suddenly, in the spring of the year, the fishy eyes of the inn begin to sparkle and to blaze late on into the evening with a red and festive glare. The herring-fishers, like a swarm of locusts, have descended upon Loch Storport, and the whole district is alive with the signs of life.

Who that has only visited Storport in the dull season would know it now, on this fair day during the herring harvest? A quarter of a mile from the pier stretches a green flat island, and the space between island and pier is full of fishing-boats of all descriptions, anchored so closely together that they seem roosting like birds on a bough. Everywhere rises the blue smoke of peat fires: from the shores of the loch, from the tiny islands, from the heights above the tower;—everywhere are mud huts, tents, inverted boats, used by the myriad fishermen for dwellings. The air is full of the smell of fish, the bones of boiled fish are scattered everywhere on the ground, fish are drying on the beach and on the stones above the village, the boats at the quay are full of fish newly caught—fish everywhere, and the smell of fish; tempted by which, a crowd of gulls, hundreds upon

hundreds, are hovering and darting above Storport with discordant screams. Everywhere also are fishermen and fisherwomen in all costumes and from all parts of the British Isles: from the cheery Isle of Man fisher, with his oilskin suit and sou'wester, to the dull and dowie Hercules of the East Coast, wrapped in wool and flannel enough to suffocate an ox; from the quick shrewd girl attached to the east-country boat, and cooking for the men and mending their clothes, to the strapping women of all ages who earn their living by herring-gutting, and live in all sorts of strange nooks ashore.

Everywhere close to the water's edge and in the water, fish, fishermen, fishing-boats, wild women, nets, ropes, and oars: a confused moving patchwork which fatigues the eye and bewilders the brain.

Passing hastily among the crowd of human beings, one sees more magnificent specimens of male strength and symmetry, coupled with more picturesque variety of costume, than could readily be seen elsewhere under any circumstances. The women are not so handsome, but there are glorious creatures among them—"weeds of glorious feature"—scarcely less attractive because they can put out almost masculine strength if need be, and give and take those sort of jokes which are more pointed in their language than delicate in their meaning.

Through the crowd which besieges the quay walks Father MacDonald, the priest of Uribol, his white head towering over all, and his face looking at once grave, benignant, and kind. Mingled up with the crowds of strange fishermen and fisherwomen are drovers and their dogs, mendicants, shepherds out for a holiday, farm servants in gaudy finery, cattle-dealers with their pockets stuffed full of one-pound notes, and ragged cotters of the isles. Hand after hand is thrust out to grasp that of the priest; greeting after greeting is showered upon him; and many a kind word and respectful salutation is thrown after him.

Pass now to the declivity above Storport, on a road crowded with country-people on foot and on horseback. It is obviously a gala day, though there are no signs of booths or shows. The small heathery knolls on every side of them are covered with black cattle, sheep, shepherds, and drovers, and barking dogs,—a perfect sea of bustle and commotion. On one stormy height a lantern-jawed, foxy-whiskered itinerant is preaching, to the obvious bewilderment of half-a-dozen urchins and a semi-tipsy shepherd. Along the winding country road, as far as eye can see, the people are coming in a thin stream; troops of cattle driven by shouting dogs, and ever breaking from the track; poor women leading their solitary cows to the market by straw-ropes; fat, red-cloaked peasant-women seated sideways on horses in a wooden framework, with their fat legs cased in coloured stockings and thickly booted, resting on a species of wooden tray; herd-girls, red-complexioned, shock-haired, white-



toothed, grinning from their straw-stuffed trusses on the backs of cows or oxen; tacksmen mounted on their sturdy ponies, and crofters toiling barefoot; groups of men, women, and children, gaily dressed, jolting in rude springless carts behind old horses that creep along at the pace of snails. Across the flat country inland, as far as eye can see, nothing is to be seen but low green land and small hillocks, broken up with innumerable lakes and stagnant lagoons. In the far distance peeps a spire; and still further, far as eye can see, a great rain-cloud is poisoning over the Atlantic.

On the knolls above the quay, where the cattle are legion, groups of cattle-dealers and farmers are now wrangling together and bargaining at the height of their voices. The dirty inn is already crowded with drinkers, and the excitement is beginning.

At the corner of the crowd our attention is attracted to a wild ragged-looking man, who, with wild cries and seeming imprecations, is clutching the sleeve of an old man, and fast causing a crowd to collect around them. The speaker seems one wasted by hunger and disease. His black sunken eyes have the sparkle of death, his cheeks are those of a skeleton, his lean hand is nothing but skin and bone. The old man whom he is addressing looks at him with ill-concealed rage and contempt.

We cannot understand a word that is being said, though the look and gesture of the speaker, and the occasional groans and exclamations of the bystanders, indicate that the general tide of feeling is running against the old man.

Carelessly addressing an old farmer who is looking on from a little distance, and whom we have just heard speaking English, we inquire the meaning of the scene.

The farmer draws down the edges of his mouth and shrugs his shoulders.

"It's shust a tenant pody that has ta'en a drap, and is speaking his mind to the factor. You've no Gaelic?"

"No. Who is the old man, and what has he done?"

"He's Peter Dougall, my Lord Cairnmore's factor, and he's cleared awa the man there, Neil Mackinnon, and the family, because they couldna pay their rent."

"Oh, I see! and the man is giving him a bit of his mind?"

"Shust. He's an awfu' man, the factor; but what can a pody do if a pody'll no pay rent for the goot land? It canna be got for naething, and it's no wise to offend the factor."

As he spoke, the factor, with a face cold as marble and nearly as white, especially round the edges of the lips, shakes off the other's hold and walks away. The wretched being who had been abusing him, and who has obviously been taking liquor on an empty stomach, gazes vacantly after him with a look of wild despair; until a shepherd of his acquaintance staggers up with a bottle in his hand,



claps him on the shoulder, and offers him a draught of raw spirits. He drinks from the bottle wildly, utters an hysterical laugh, and disappears in the crowd.

Towards evening the crowd greatly diminishes, for the enormous fleet of herring-boats sails like a flock of crows to the open sea—there to rock all night at their nets at the mercy of tide and wind. It is a calm day, however,—far too calm for the taste of the fishermen; and it is a fine sight to see the red-sailed boats creeping slowly out of the calm loch—some moving with full sails in the dark patch where there is a little puff of wind, others with flapping sails being rowed slowly through a glassy calm, all creeping to the mouth of Loch Storport, where the breeze catches them, and they begin to lie over and beat with some speed. Smacks of all sizes, double and single luggers, great skiffs, all speed to the deep-sea fishing. The little bay between the island and the pier is abandoned by all save two black coasting vessels and several rakish-looking “runners,” waiting to carry the night’s fishing south; and the water all round these is like oil, and a few white gulls seated thereon are drinking the floating globules of fat, while their companions, in one vast flock, have also departed to spend the night in fishing on the open sea.

Meantime the fun of the fair waxes fast and furious. Sellers and buyers have done their business; and all have now abandoned themselves to merriment—that is to say, to furious drinking. The lowing of the cattle, the crying and singing of the men, the shrill voices of the women, make day hideous. On a smooth bit of green above the inn a ragged bagpiper and a blind fiddler are playing different tunes, and shepherds, herd-girls, farm-women, and drovers are dancing like mad people, with the usual shrieks that accompany the Highland reel. Here a couple of men are fighting, not in the knock-down English fashion, but tearing, screaming, and clinging to each other’s throats like wild cats. The dirty inn is crammed, and the sound of roaring and singing comes from the rickety door. Half-naked Highlandmen in kilts are rushing about everywhere with bottles of whiskey in their hands, beseeching their friends to drink.

Through the midst of the crowd, early in the day, passed a funeral procession—six Highlanders in mourning two abreast, then the bearers and their load, then six more men two abreast, all under the guidance of a man with a staff, under whose direction the bearers would hand the coffin over to the others, and themselves fall back into the rear until their turn came again to carry. Behind the party came two ponies carrying wicker creels with jars of whiskey inside, and rolls of tobacco. The whole had moved along to a military march played by a grey-headed piper, and disappeared to the burial-place up the country.

But now, towards night, back rush the mourners, free of their

burthen, laughing and singing, every one tipsy as Silenus, and these men become the wildest of the mirth-makers in the fair.

Night falls, and though the noise continues, the crowd grows thinner and thinner.

Every now and then the public-house door opens and some refractory drunkard is shut out into the night, and the door barred in his face. It is curious to note the different behaviours of the various parties so treated. One man stares around him vacantly, smiles feebly, and walks away unoffended; another makes the welkin ring with his howls, batters at the door with fist and feet, utters threats of the most bloody vengeance against all and sundry; another calmly lies where the enemy has deposited him, drowsily singing in chorus to the loud singing from within. Again and again, during the evening, there is a splash and a scream, and the alarm is given that some one has tumbled over the pier in the dark; but there is no fatal accident, as the water is comparatively shallow, and help is at hand.

If any curious observer or midnight dreamer should be wandering to-night among the hills and knolls surrounding Storport, he will be startled every now and then by stumbling over a corpse-like recumbent figure, which will either grunt out a sleepy disapproval, or, springing to its feet, spar tipsily at the disturber of its slumber. Most of these figures will be armed with black bottles of whiskey. The highway, too, will be sprinkled with drowsy bacchanalians. More than one well-to-do farmer is already lying tranquilly asleep on the road, still gripping the bridle of the horse from which he has gently rolled, while the quiet beast, used to its master's eccentricity, is patiently nibbling the scanty herbage on the side of the road; and a little way off, his head shepherd perhaps, quite as respectable-looking and quite as respectably clothed as his master, is sleeping too, with his tired dog curled up close to his head. With very few exceptions, there are no female night-birds of the tipsy kind, though out on the lonely hill-side more than one girl is lying coiled up in her lover's plaid, far too sick and weary to take the dark road home.

Before daybreak, however, all the thirsty plants are cooled by a drenching shower, and when the sun rises, or rather when he looks out of the clouds with a ghastly countenance, just like one who has been keeping it up overnight and is suffering for it in the morning—when light comes, and the herring-boats are again at anchor, and the pier and the shores are glittering with fresh fish, almost all the bacchanalians have disappeared from the hills and knolls, and the inn has subsided into its chronic state of dirt, darkness, languor, and general misery.

## THE LAST OF THE HANGMEN.

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What place is snugger and more pretty,  
Than a gay green Inn outside the City,  
To sit in an arbour in a garden,  
With a pot of ale and a long churchwarden !  
Amid the noise and acclamation,  
He sits unknown, in meditation :  
'Mid church-bells ringing and jingling glasses,  
Snugly enough his Sunday passes.

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Beyond the suburbs of the City, where  
Cheap stucco'd villas on the brick-field stare,  
Where half in town, half country, you espy  
The hay-cart standing at the hostelry,—  
Strike from the highway down a puddly lane,  
Skirt round a market-garden, and you gain  
A pastoral footpath, winding on for miles  
By fair green fields and over country stiles ;  
And soon, as you proceed, the busy sound  
Of the dark City at your back is drowned,  
The speedwell with its blue eye looks at you,  
The yellow primrose glimmers through the dew ;  
Out of the-sprouting hedgerow at your side,  
Instead of the town sparrow starveling-eyed,  
The blackbird whistles and the finches sing ;  
Instead of smoke you breathe the pleasant Spring ;  
And shading eyes dim from street dust you mark,  
With soft pulsations soaring up, the LARK,  
Till o'er your head, a speck against the gleam,  
He sings, and the great City fades in dream !  
Five miles the path meanders ; then again  
You reach the road, but like a leafy lane  
It wanders now ; and lo ! you stand before  
A quaint old country Inn, with open door,  
Fresh-watered troughs, and the sweet smell of hay.  
And if, perchance, it be the seventh day—  
Or any feast-day, calendar'd or not—  
Merry indeed will be this smiling spot ;  
For on the neighbouring common will be seen  
Groups from the City, romping on the green ;  
The vans with gay pink curtains empty stand,  
The horses graze unharness'd close at hand ;  
Bareheaded wenches play at games in rings,  
Or, strolling, swing their bonnets by the strings ;

'Prentices, galloping with gasp and groan,  
 On donkeys ride, till out of breath, or thrown ;  
 False gipsies, with pale cheeks by juice stain'd brown,  
 And hulking loungers, gather from the town.  
 The fiddle squeaks, they dance, they sing, they play,  
 Waifs from the City casting care away,  
 And with the country smells and sights are blent  
 Loud town-bred oaths and urban merriment.

Ay ; and behind the Inn are gardens green,  
 And arbours snug, where families are seen  
 Tea-drinking in the shadow ; some, glad souls,  
 On the smooth-shaven carpet play at bowls ;  
 And half a dozen, rowing round and round,  
 Upon the shallow skating-pond are found,  
 And ever and anon will one of these  
 Upset, and stand there, wading to the knees,  
 Righting his crank canoe ! Down neighbouring walks  
 Go youthful lovers in delightful talks ;  
 While from the arbour-seats smile pleasantly  
 The older members of the companie ;  
 And plump round matrons sweat in Paisley shawls,  
 And on the grass the crowing baby sprawls.

Now hither, upon such a festal day,  
 I from my sky-high lodging made my way,  
 And followed straggling feet with summer smile ;  
 "Jog on," I sung, "and merrily hent the stile,"  
 Until I reached the place of revelry ;  
 And there, hard by the groups who sat at tea,  
 But in a quiet arbour, cool and deep,  
 Around whose boughs white honeysuckles creep,  
 A Face I saw familiar to my gaze,  
 In scenes far different and on darker days :—  
 An aged man, with white and reverent hair,  
 Brow patriarchal yet deep-lined with care,  
 His melancholy eye, in a half dream,  
 Watching the groups with philosophic gleam ;  
 Decent his dress, of broadcloth black and clean,  
 Clean-starch'd his front, and dignified his mien.  
 His right forefinger busy in the bowl  
 Of a long pipe of clay, whence there did roll  
 A halo of gray vapour round his face,  
 He sat, like the white Genius of the place ;  
 And at his left hand on the table stood  
 A pewter-pot, filled up with porter good,  
 Which ever and anon, with dreamy gaze  
 And arm-sweep proud, he to his lips did raise.

'Twas Sunday ; and in melancholy swells  
 Came the low music of the still church-bells,  
 Scarce audible, blown o'er the meadows green,  
 Out of the cloud of London dimly seen—

Whence, thro' the summer mist, at intervals,  
 We caught the far-off shadow of St. Paul's.

Silent he sat, unnoted in the crowd,  
 With all his greatness round him like a cloud,  
 Unknown, unwelcomed, unsuspected quite,  
 Smoking his pipe like any common wight ;  
 Cheerful, yet distant, patronising here  
 The common gladness from his prouder sphere.  
 Cold was his eye, and ominous now and then  
 The look he cast upon those merry men  
 Around him ; and, from time to time, sad-eyed,  
 He rolled his reverent head from side to side  
 With dismal shake ; and, his sad heart to cheer,  
 Hid his great features in the pot of beer.

But when, with easy bow and lifted hat,  
 I enter'd the green arbour where he sat,  
 And most politely him by name did greet,  
 He went as white as any winding-sheet !  
 Yea, trembled like a man whose lost eyes note  
 A pack of wolves upleaping at his throat !  
 But when, in a respectful tone and kind,  
 I tried to lull his fears and soothe his mind,  
 And vowed the fact of his identity  
 Was as a secret wholly safe with me—  
 Explaining also, seeing him demur,  
 That I too was a public character—  
 The GREAT UNKNOWN (as I shall call him here)  
 Grew calm, replenish'd soon his pot of beer  
 At my expense, and in a little while  
 His tongue began to wag, his face to smile ;  
 And in the simple self-revealing mode  
 Of all great natures heavy with the load  
 Of pride and power, he edged himself more near,  
 And poured his griefs and wrongs into mine ear.  
 " Well might I be afraid, and sir to you !  
 They'd tear me into pieces if they knew.  
 Ah ! quiet as they look, and bright, and smart,  
 Each chap there has a tiger in his heart !  
 At play they are, but wild beasts all the same—  
 Not to be teased although they look so tame ;  
 And many of them, plain as eye can trace,  
 Have got my 'scutecheon written on the face.

It's all a matter of mere destiny  
Whether they go all right or come to me :  
Mankind is bad, sir, naterally bad ! ”

And as he shook his head with omen sad,  
I answered him, in his own cynic strain :

“ Yes, it's enough to make a man complain.  
Ah ! sir, the world so vicious is and low,  
It always treats its benefactors so.  
If people had their rights, and rights were clear,  
You would not sit unknown, unhonour'd, here ;  
But all would bow to you, and hold you great,  
The first and mightiest member of the State.  
Who is the inmost wheel of the machine ?  
Who keeps the Constitution sharp and clean ?  
Who finishes what statesmen only plan,  
And keeps the whole play going ? You're the man !  
At one end of the State the eye may view  
Her Majesty, and at the other—*you* ;  
And of the two, both precious, I aver,  
They seem more ready to dispense with *her* ! ”

The Great Man watched me with a solemn look,  
Then from his lips the pipe he slowly took,  
And answered gruffly, in a whisper hot.

“ I don't know if you're making game or not !  
But, dash my buttons, tho' you put it strong,  
It's my opinion you're not far from wrong !  
There's not another man this side the sea  
Can settle of the State's account like me.  
The work from which all other people shrink  
Comes natural to me as meat and drink,—  
All neat, all clever, all perform'd so pat,  
It's quite an honour to be hung like that !  
People don't howl and bellow when they meet  
The Sheriff or the Gaoler in the street ;  
They never seem to long in their mad fits  
To tear the Home Secretary into bits ;  
When Judges in white hats to Epsom Down  
Drive gay as Tom and Jerry, folk don't frown ;  
They cheer the Queen and Royal Family ;  
But only let them catch a sight of *me*,  
And like a pack of hounds they howl and storm !  
And that's their gratitude ; 'cause I perform,  
In genteel style and in a first-rate way,  
The work they're making for me night and day !

Why, if a fellow had his rights, d'ye see,  
 I should be honour'd as I ought to be—  
 They'd pay me well for doing what I do,  
 And touch their hats whene'er I came in view.  
 Well, after all, they do as they are told;  
 They're less to blame than Government, I hold.  
 Government *sees* my value, and it knows  
 I keep the whole game going as it goes,  
 And yet it holds me down and makes me cheap,  
 And calls me in at odd times like a sweep  
 To clean a dirty chimney. Let it smoke,  
 And every mortal in the State must choke!  
 And yet, though always ready at the call,  
 I get no gratitude, no thanks at all.  
 Instead of rank, I get a wretched fee,  
 Instead of thanks, a sneer or scowl may-be,  
 Instead of honour such as others win,  
 Why, I must hide *incog.* to save my skin.  
 When I am sent for to perform my duty,  
 Instead of coming in due state and beauty,  
 With outriders and dashing grays to draw  
 (Like any other mighty man of law),  
 Disguised, unknown, and with a guilty cheek,  
 The gaol I enter like an area sneak!  
 And when all things have been performed with art  
 (With my young man to do the menial part)  
 Again out of the dark, when none can see,  
 I creep unseen to my obscurity!"

His vinous cheek with virtuous wrath was flushed,  
 And to his nose the purple current rushed,  
 While with a hand that shook a little now,  
 He mopp'd the perspiration from his brow,  
 Sighing; and on his features I descried  
 A sparkling tear of sorrow and of pride.  
 Meantime, around him all was mirth and May,  
 The sport was merry and all hearts were gay,  
 The green boughs sparkled back the merriment,  
 The garden honeysuckle scatter'd scent,  
 The warm girls giggled and the lovers squeezed,  
 The matrons drinking tea look'd on full pleased,  
 And far away the church-bells sad and slow  
 Ceased on the scented air. But still the woe  
 Grew on the Great Man's face—the smiling sky,  
 The light, the pleasure, on his fish-like eye  
 Fell colourless;—at last he spoke again,  
 Growing more philosophic in his pain:



"Two sorts of people fill this mortal sphere,  
 Those who are hung, and those who just get clear;  
 And I'm the schoolmaster (tho' you may laugh),  
 Teaching good manners to the second half.  
 Without my help to keep the scamps in awe,  
 You'd have no virtue and you'd know no law;  
 And now they only hang for blood alone,  
 Ten times more hard to rule the mob have grown.  
 I've heard of late some foolish folk have plann'd  
 To put an end to hanging in the land;  
 But Lord! how little do the donkeys know  
 This world of ours, when they talk nonsense so!  
 It's downright blasphemy! You might as well  
 Try to get rid at once of Heaven and Hell!  
 Mankind is bad, sir, naterally bad,  
 Both rich and poor, man, woman, sad, or glad!  
 While some to keep scot-free have got the wit  
 (Not that they're really better—devil a bit!),  
 Others have got my mark so plain and fair  
 In both their eyes, I stop, and gape, and stare.  
 Look at that fellow stretch'd upon the green,  
 Strong as a bull, though only seventeen;  
 Bless you, I know the party every limb,  
 I've hung a score *fac-similes* of him!  
 And cast your eye on that pale wench who sips  
 Gin in the corner; note her hanging lips,  
 The neat-shaped boots, and the neglected lace:  
 There's baby-murder written on her face!—  
 Tho' accidents may happen now and then,  
 I know my mark on women and on men,  
 And oft I sigh, beholding it so plain,  
 To think what heaps of labour still remain!"

He sigh'd, and yet methought he smackt his lips,  
 As one who in anticipation sips  
 A feast to come. Then I, with a sly thought,  
 Drew forth a picture I had lately bought  
 In Regent Street, and begged the man of fame  
 To give his criticism on the same.  
 First from their case his spectacles he took,  
 Great silver-rimm'd, and with deep searching look  
 The picture's lines in silence pondered he.

"This is as bad a face as ever I see!  
 This is no common area-sneak or thief,  
 No stealer of a pocket-handkerchief,  
 No! deep's the word, and knowing, and precise,  
 Afraid of nothing, but as cool as ice.

Look at his ears, how very low they lie,  
 Lobes far below the level of his eye,  
 And there's a mouth, like any rat-trap's tight,  
 And at the edges bloodless, close, and white.  
 Who is the party? Caught, on any charge?  
 There's mischief near, if he remains at large!"

Gasping with indignation, angry-eyed,  
 "Silence! 'tis very blasphemy," I cried;  
 "Misguided man, whose insight is a sham,  
 These noble features you would brand and damn,  
 This saintly face so subtle, calm, and high,  
 Are those of one who would not wrong a fly—  
 A friend of man, whom all man's sorrows stir,  
 'Tis Mr. BLANK, the great PHILOSOPHER!"

There for a moment he to whom I spake  
 Seemed staggered, but, with the same ominous shake  
 Of the head, he, rallying, wore a smile half kind,  
 Pitying my simplicity of mind.

"Sir," said he, "from my word I will not stir—  
 I've seen that look on many a murderer;  
 But don't mistake—it stands to common sense  
 That eddication makes the difference!  
 I've heard the party's name, and know that he  
 Is a good pleader for my trade and me;  
 And well he may be! Lord! a clever man  
 Sees pretty well what others seldom can,—  
 That those mark'd qualities which make him great  
 In one way, might by just a turn of fate  
 Have raised him in another! Ah, it's sad—  
 Mankind is bad, sir, naterally bad!  
 It takes a genius in our busy time  
 To plan and carry out a bit of crime,  
 That shakes the land, and raises up one's hair;  
 Most murder now is but a poor affair—  
 No art, no cunning, just a few blind blows  
 Struck by a bullet-headed rough who knows  
 No better. Clever men now see full plain  
 That crime don't answer. Thanks to *me*, again!  
 Ah, when I think what would become of men  
 Without my bit of schooling now and then,—  
 To teach the foolish they must mind their play,  
 And keep the clever under every day,—  
 I shiver! As it is, they're kept by me  
 To decent sorts of daily villany—  
 Law, money-lending, factoring on the land,  
 Share-broking, banking with no cash in hand,

And many a sort of weapon they may use  
Which never brings their neck into the noose ;  
Ay, if they're talented they can invent  
Plenty of crime that gets no punishment,  
Do lawful murder with no sort of fear  
As coolly as I drink this pot of beer ! ”

The Great Man paused and drank ; his face was grim,  
Half-buried in the pot ; and o'er its rim  
His eye, like the law's bull's-eye, flashing bright  
To deepen darkness round it, threw its light  
On the gay scene before him, and it seemed  
Rendered all dark around it as it gleamed.  
A shadow fell upon the merry place,  
Each figure grew distorted, and each face  
Spoke of crime hidden and of evil thought.  
Darkling I gazed, sick-hearted and distraught,  
In silence. Black and decent at my side,  
With reverent hair, sat melancholy-eyed  
The Patriarch. To my head I held my hand,  
And ponder'd, and the look of the fair land  
Seemed deathlike. On the darkness of my brain  
The voice, a little thicker, broke again :  
“ Ah, things don't thrive as they throve once,” he said,  
“ And I'm alone now my old woman's dead.  
I find the Sundays dull. First I attend  
The morning service, then this way I wend  
To take my pipe and drop of beer ; and then,  
Home to a lonely meal in town again.  
It's a dull world !—and grudges me my hire—  
I ought to get a pension and retire.  
What living man has served his country so ?  
But who's to take my place I scarcely know !  
Ah, Heaven will punish their neglect anon :—  
They'll know my merit, when I'm dead and gone ! ”

He stood upon his legs, and these, I think  
Were rather shaky, part with age, part drink,  
And with a piteous smile, full of the sense  
Of human vanity and impotence,  
Grimly he stood, half senile and half sly,  
A sight to make the very angels cry ;  
Then lifted up a hat with weepers on—  
(Worn for some human creature dead and gone)  
Placing it on his head (unconsciously  
A little on one side) held out to me  
His right hand, and, though grim beyond belief,  
Wore unaware an air of rakish grief—

Even so we parted, and with hand-wave proud  
He faded like a ghost into the crowd.  
Home to the mighty City wandering,  
Breathing the freshness of the fields of Spring,  
Hearing the lark, and seeing bright winds run  
Between the bending rye-grass and the sun,  
I mused and mused; till with a solemn gleam  
My soul closed, and I saw as in a dream,  
Apocalyptic, cutting heaven across,  
Two mighty shapes—a Gallows and a Cross.  
And these twain, with a sea of lives that clomb  
Up to their base and struck and fell in foam,  
Moved, trembled, changed; and lo! the first became  
A jet-black Shape that bowed its head in shame  
Before the second, which in turn did change  
Into a luminous Figure, sweet and strange,  
Stretching out mighty arms to bless the thing  
Which hushed its breath beneath Him wondering.  
And lo! these visions vanished with no word  
In brightness; and like one that wakes I heard  
The church bells chime and the cathedrals toll,  
Filling the mighty City like its soul.

Then, like a spectre strange and woe-begone,  
Uprose again, with mourning weepers on,  
His hat a little on one side, his breath  
Heavy and hot, the gray-hair'd Man of Death,  
Tottering, grog-pimpled, with a trembling pace  
Under the Gateway of the Silent Place,  
At whose sad opening the great Puppet stands  
The rope of which he tugs with palsied hands.  
Poor devil! see, with feeble fingers still  
He tugs away—full of such eager will!  
Nor notices with his weak wandering wit,  
The ghostly company that near him sit,  
Watching and grinning just within the Gate;  
Ladies and gentlemen in shrouds of state,  
Laughing and nodding, screaming grim as Death  
Whene'er he chokes away another's breath!  
And every one of these, if you will note,  
Has got a purple stain around the throat,  
And all their necks, altho' they grin so gay,  
Are like the wry-necks,—twisted all one way!

Christ help me! whither do my wild thoughts run?  
And Christ help thee, thou lonely aged one!  
Christ help us all, till all that's dark grows clear—  
Are those indeed the Sabbath bells I hear?

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

## THE ART OF BEAUTY.

### PLEASURE OF BEAUTY.

THE culture of personal beauty is a legitimate art. The airs and stratagems too often employed by an acknowledged belle frequently, no doubt, sink into mere affectation. But this is not the fault of the Beautiful Art, it is rather the fault of an imperfect acquaintance with that art. The actor who does not act so that what he portrays becomes reality to himself and his audience, is an inferior artist; and the painter whose creations are only imitations, is an inferior artist.

To give pleasure to others can never be other in itself than a high aim, and the pleasures of the eye are to cultivated people greater than the pleasures of the table, which society makes so much of. The woman who makes herself always graceful and seemly is "a joy for ever"—the man who spends a lifetime in trying to put more beauty in and about life, spends it well. Most people are half unconsciously grateful for beauty in any shape wherever it comes; let the "serious" people say what they will, it is a lifelong need of our nature. We cannot stamp it out. We live in a beautiful world, we love a beautiful building, a beautiful room, a beautiful face, a beautiful costume; and if we love these things, they are worth cultivating—just as a garden is worth cultivating for flowers. Darwin tells us a very curious truth in his book "On the Descent of Man," about different standards of beauty. Beauty seems to some people to mean a very pronounced form of whatever type of feature or hue we are most accustomed to: in short, the exaggeration of characteristic peculiarities. Thus the African savage, with his black hide, his huge thick mouth, small eyes, flat nose, and heavy ears, considers that woman most lovely who has the blackest skin, the thickest mouth, the least apparent eyes, &c. We eastern nations, whose facial characteristics are a small oval face, coloured white and pink, large eyes, prominent nose, and narrow jaw, think the excess of these characteristics to be *beauty*, and the deviation from them *ugliness*. The African savage considers the Englishwoman hideous with her front teeth not extracted, and white "like a dog's," her lips not torn by either a copper ring or a piece of wood, and her cheeks coloured "like a potato flower;" the Englishman recoils from a Nubian lady whose smile brings her lips on a level with her eyebrows, and draws her nose back to her ears.

There is no doubt a great deal in this theory—much more than we can quite realise—that beauty of form, like the colours of the prism, is non-existent except in our own eyes and minds. And yet even on this lowest platform, the pleasure excited in the mind by what to

that mind seems beauty—even supposing it to be a flat nose—is so immense that it is worth fighting, living, and dying for.

Is it not then a kind of duty to make life beautiful—to disguise deformity, to provide by care and forethought for others, a pleasure which costs so little and brings in so much even to the giver, that one is tempted at times to fancy that vanity itself is but the abuse or exaggeration of a natural and noble quality—since it seeks, in the culture of beauty, a pleasure which tends to refine and elevate the mind in a number of direct and indirect ways.

#### PAIN OF UGLINESS.

Those whose minds have been cultivated by having beautiful things always about them, are incredibly sensitive to awkward forms, inappropriate colours, and inharmonious combinations. To such persons, certain rooms, certain draperies, certain faces cause not only the mere feeling of disapprobation, but even a kind of physical pain. Sometimes they might be unable to explain what affected them so unpleasantly, or how they were affected, but they feel an uneasy sense of oppression and discomfort—they would fain flee away and let the simple skies, or the moon with her sweet stare, soothe them into healthy feeling again. This sense of oppression would probably be neither understood nor believed in by two-thirds of the ordinary run of ordinarily educated people, in England at least; but it is very real to those whose passionate care for the beautiful makes it a *necessity* to them—and these are the subtle and delicate souls that build up the art-crown of a nation. The uneasy feeling to which I allude is very similar to what we all realise, more or less, according to our constitutional susceptibility in the presence of unsympathetic persons.

There are garments, as there are faces and natures, which have no “bar” in them, nothing that stops with a sudden shock your pleasure in them, nothing that dissatisfies or perplexes you; there are colours that are always becoming because natural, dresses which are beautiful because sensible, and fulfilling the aim for which they were invented and intended. There are rooms in which everybody looks handsome and dignified, which set off every dress and improve everything carried into them, and in which you feel always comfortable. I wish such rooms were more common: let it be noted, they are invariably rooms which have not too much light, and whose colours are few and deep.

#### OLD AND NEW COLOURS.

The colours which are now condemned as “old-fashioned”—the colours in vogue before the present century—have been almost invariably more beautiful and more becoming than any we now have. The truth of the matter is, a colour may be too pure: and of late our manufacturers, urged on by the vulgar taste for merely gaudy tints, have so much improved in colour-distilling and dyeing, that our

modern colours are hideous through their extreme purity. The old-fashioned blue, which had a dash of yellow in it, and which looks sadly faded against the fashionable staring blues, was one of the most exquisite hues ever worn; so was the warm dun yellow we see in the old masters' pictures; so was the soft, brownish crimson. The same remark applies to Oriental colours. The old Indian and Persian manufactures, which will never grow old, look for ever perfect and grand, and this is not only due to the wondrous Oriental feeling for combining colours—it is partly due to the imperfection of the colours they used. The reds are chiefly dull, the blues greenish, the white yellowish or grey, the black half-brown: this may be noticed in any old Indian carpet or shawl. But alas! the Orientals are being demoralised by the European mania for harsh and vulgar contrasts; and it is becoming more and more difficult to procure the old subdued mixtures. In the goods they fabricate for the French and English markets, they are beginning to use the cheap imported European dyes, although they still, through sheer ignorance, adhere to the old patterns. Soon they may give place to the modern bad ones, and we shall have nothing better from the East than we can make at home, as far as harmony of tints and poetry of design are concerned.

In some strange way, a certain amount of imperfection is necessary to beauty. Our perfect machinery cannot make the curiously charming fabrics that these poor people weave with their obsolete looms; we have lost the strange charm of colour which we, in common with them, once possessed to a great degree, and certainly we have not improved on the ancient patterns; we have to go back to them again and again for our lace, for our brocades, and for our carpets. We have perfected our method, and lost our picturesque effects; we have perfected our colours and lost our perceptions of, and feeling for, real beauty.

As for colours in dress, we have quite forgotten that they must be always subservient to the complexion. For instance, no blue eyes can bear the propinquity of the modern bright blues, without turning grey—indeed, there are no blue eyes now; no cheek can out-bloom the modern pinks and scarlets; it is because these colours have been brought to such a pitch of perfection that they dazzle, but enhance nothing, and they have the retributive effect of not lasting. The antique colours, like the Oriental ones, may have faded, and probably did so, but they never showed either the change of time nor the stains of wear to anything like the same extent, nor so early, as the modern colours; they were not so bright, though they were far more subtle. In those days one could put on a gown half-a-dozen times without looking slovenly; it would look beautiful and good to the last. Ruskin says truly, that “no colour harmony is of high order unless involving indescribable tints;” and this is the secret of the antique colours—each partook of some other; their very imperfection



made them the most perfect of all colours. I will nevertheless confess with joy that I see a glimmer of hope in the shops for the British public. This summer there has been a struggle to defeat the glaring colours by dun colours—tertiaries of every hue, and mixtures of the same colour in various shades in a single dress: I have seen a gown in a shop-window made of three different shades of mud colour, another of slate and mud colour, and both costumes were very effective. There is also hope in the new shades of olive, salmon and citron, and green-blue that have recently appeared. They are often desperately bright, but they are refreshing, having lost the sharp edge of their purity, and become tempered with remote or opposing colours.

#### PRETTY AND UGLY WOMEN.

"Colour," said Sir Joshua Reynolds, the greatest of our colourists, "is the last attainment of excellence in every school of painting." It requires not only the innate gift of seeing what is really harmonious in the arrangement of colours—and this is an exceptional gift—it requires also great study, and thought, and practice; and it ought to be the study of every woman, as it is the last attainment of excellence in the art of looking beautiful. No woman can look well, even as well as she was meant to look, unless she is careful what colours are placed about her, in her dress, and in the room she inhabits. A really handsome person needs this care almost as much as one who is not by nature handsome.

No woman can say truthfully that she does not care whether she is pretty or not. Every woman does care. The immutable laws of her being have made physical attractiveness as much a natural glory to her as strength is to a man.

Here I may be told that what I am saying is superfluous, for perfect beauty has no need of art to enhance it, and that those who have been born with hard, or worse, with perfectly uninteresting features, do not want to be told that physical attractiveness is indispensable to them. But it is especially to the plain and to the generally ill-favoured that I address these words of advice and warning, and should Beauty's self find a few useful hints, I see no reason why she should not avail herself of them. I know that there are people who look well anywhere and anyhow; no vulgarity, no carelessness of speech, dress, or attitude seems able to disenchant them; but these rarely-gifted persons are but the exceptions that prove the rule; and even in their case what Sir Philip Sidney spake is true—he says there is that in well-chosen surroundings

"Which doth even beauty beautify,  
And most bewitch the captived eye;"

and Herrick, too, in his "Poetry of Dress," seems to have had an astute appreciation of how beauty may be beautified. These men lived in the sixteenth century—a time when colour in dress was an

understood and valued adjunct, and before we had learned to make our dwellings intolerable to the eye.

An immense number of ill-tempered ugly women are ill-tempered because they are ugly. They do not know it; their friends don't understand, and make no allowances; but heavy, indeed, is the burden upon these poor women, and pernicious is its effect on their moral character very often. I have heard it said that ugly women are *always* bad tempered; this is an over-statement, but there is a certain degree of truth in the saying, cruel as it is. An ugly child cares nothing for its ugliness; but when it grows older, and perceives that it lacks something which is prized and honoured, and is twitted with the deficiency, and neglected through it, and is reminded of it every time it looks in the glass or in another face, the constant disappointment begins very early to embitter the whole nature, and creates a melancholy shyness; and when the desire to attract awakes with years, and the young girl finds her fairer friends preferred before her, the vain endeavours to please by other means dishearten her, and she grows sarcastic, ill-natured, envious of everybody, though half unconsciously; many other faults follow, and she becomes unhappy and morose. No one ever knows what she suffers; but she does suffer very acutely.

I am certain that, however laudable the efforts of ugliness to attract by learning, by accomplishments, by general usefulness, or by satire, nothing *really* compensates for the want of personal beauty. The best that an ugly woman can do is to make you forget that she is ugly for the time being; she cannot compensate. And whilst I should advise all women to become as intelligent and clever as they can, whether they be plain or pretty, still I wish mere beauty were made more an acknowledged and honourable art than it is, by all those to whom God has given eyes and an intelligent brain. It is *not* a sin or a folly to long, as every woman longs, to be lovely. She is so constituted, and her beauty "is a glory to her."

In England more than in any other country, the curious stupidity of people about their appearance is only equalled by their foolishness. No one seems to care the least how he (or she) looks. Most girls are so ignorant that they think there is nothing to know. If they are handsome, they surround themselves with as many disadvantages as their plainer sisters, and do their best to look their very worst; if they are ugly—well, God "made them so," and they have got to be content. Why not say, because babies are born ignorant, no one is ever to educate them because God "made them so?"

The Englishwomen are considered by all nations to be among the most beautiful women in the world, whilst the French are commonly far less gifted by nature, but a Frenchwoman understands how to hide her defects and enhance her beauties to a far greater extent than an Englishwoman—and this, not because her moral character is necessarily lower, but simply because she belongs to an artistic race, cultivating æsthetic tastes—where sculpture, and painting, and music,

and beauty within and without are looked on, not as distinct *trades*, as in England, but as parts of a duty owed to our fellow-creatures and to the best that is in us. With English people it is very different. Let us put a case.

## AN EPISODE OF DRESS.

I go one evening to visit a family of sisters, well-born, well-educated, and sufficiently well off. The eldest is called Emily. She is not pretty, and never was, and has now reached eight-and-twenty, and become the chaperone of her younger sisters. She has never been engaged, and seems to think that as her fourth sister is now eighteen, she has herself no further chance of marrying, and has only to accept cheerfully her *rôle* of old maid of the family. It is no doubt her destiny never to be cared for by anybody, and she was intended for one of the Useful Ones. So she goes in for extreme usefulness, is an admirable daughter, despises amusements as "nice for the young ones, but rather frivolous," wears her soft brown hair scraped down on each side of her face "tidily," high unfashionable dresses in the evening, thinks of every one's comfort and happiness but her own, and refuses to dance. I find Emily, on my arrival, in a dark silk dress, knitting a stocking, in the strongest light in the room. As the gas pours on her patient face, I notice instantly that she is somewhat *passée*; in any other place this might have been unobserved, for I know her to be only twenty-eight, though to-night I find it difficult to believe it; her features are well-formed, but the style of dressing the hair absolutely forces on your attention the increasing hollowness of her cheek. I remember a young fellow who liked her very much last year, and would probably have ended by telling her so, but he could not stand her practised old-maidish ways and sayings; in short, he could not marry a girl who would not sit still for a single moment without knitting. I have seen Emily look younger than she looks to-night; but that was one sunny day in a room whose pink blinds were drawn down to the ground.

Emily shakes hands with fingers entangled in grey worsted, knits hard through my second sentence, and then, lest attention to me should cause her to drop a stitch, I go off to find Alice, who is the prettiest one of the four. A prettier girl I have never seen than Alice—as she looks sometimes; but she makes terrible mistakes. She has what is called golden hair—that is, drab. She has heard that people with fair hair ought to wear blue. So she wears blue—a shade too dark, which does not impart a scrap of yellow to her hair. She has a velvet band fastened tightly across it—her head is not a pretty shape, though she has a sweet smile—she does not know that a broad band across the hair is the most trying thing in the world—not one head in twenty can bear it. I don't discover her for some minutes: the drawing-room is a very gay one, with sky-blue doors, and white walls and ceiling. Presently I discern Alice sitting against the blue door in the usual blue dress a shade too deep. She informs me that I have passed her twice—I do not think I am to blame!

Her next sister, Dora, is standing by her in white: her dress is merino; and though evidently new, from the angular form of the plaits and the loud crackling of the lining, it naturally looks dirty against the snowy freshness of the paper on the wall. Having just come in from the dark street, the extreme whiteness of the room dazzles me; I can't see outlines. Dora is very fallow, and unhappily carries a blue fan, which makes her look as yellow as a guinea.

Clemence "came out" last week; and is nearly as pretty as Alice in her way. She has a dark complexion which, when she has a colour, is very clear and beautiful. She is a little coquette, and just now, when she does not know I am watching her, she looks charming. I can just see her profile against a pure yellow screen which I have always hitherto hated for its raw colour, because they generally have the gaslight sharp upon it. To-night the lamp happens to be on one side, and the hue which it borrows in the half-light enhances the slight flush on Clemence's cheek. I cannot see her dress, for a large crimson chair stands between us. She knows I admire her. When she observes me she will blush, and perhaps banter me. Now she turns and comes forward. Alas! she wears a satin dress the exact colour of her face, with flounces up to the waist. I had always fancied her tall—to-night she appears hardly four feet high: this is caused by the flounces. I am disappointed, and liked her better behind the chair. As we speak she turns her head over with what would be a pretty gesture if she had not a scar on her throat, and places against her cheek a scarlet fan—this is the finishing touch—which takes away absolutely every vestige of her colour. She looks positively hideous as she stands. I will go back to Alice.

Alice has the prettiest of shoulders, and perhaps that may excuse her for adopting a fashion so ugly as a low dress. Her arms are a little too fat, and rather red at the elbow. The hard straight line around her neck, trimmed with hard X's in blue velvet, would ruin any neck but hers. Imagine Sir Thomas Lawrence painting a lady with such a pattern on her dress! She is occupied in welcoming some guests.

Who is the old young lady who has just come into the room with a lady so fat and *décolletée* that her friends ought to shut her up? The old young lady is terribly thin, and also very *décolletée*. There is a frightful hollow in her back; the vertebrae of her spine are like a crocodile's; but she is a brave woman, and obeys the fashion. She has also lost a tooth. Probably she is one of Emily's sort—abhors what is false: her hair is very thin, so much so that it would be true to say she had none, but she would scorn a single band of false hair. I said the fat woman was also alarmingly *décolletée*,—I don't know which of them is most offensive. Her gloves are cutting through her wrists, her voluminous white and pink train impedes her already difficult progress. My hostess's daughters are better than this! I perceive Emily's foot: it is large: she seems rather proud of its size, and protrudes it, encased in a conspicuous white kid sheath, as a

mark of her superiority to these considerations of form. Alice, I know, has a tiny little foot: to-night it is entirely concealed by the most enormous rosettes I have ever seen, and might be as big as a Piet's.

The last straw has been laid on my back, and I take my leave.

To a man who has a quick eye for the picturesque, or, let us say, the appropriate, and there are such men, these sights in modern drawing-rooms are more than disagreeable—they are ghastly. I am saying *nothing* about indecency. That is hardly a portion of my present subject. But why, if a woman has a neck like a skeleton, must she tell the world so? Why, if fate has made her grow stouter than it is permitted to be, must she squeeze and fold her fat into a tight low dress because it is the fashion? Why must she draw a hard line around her shoulders, that seems to cut her in two, and wear sleeves which are mere straps to keep her gown on, without caring, without knowing, whether her arms are models? Why must she wear trimmings of great O's and X's and vandykes on her skirt, so that at a little distance the first thing about her that strikes the eye is the trimming? Why, if very tall, must she take the arm of a very little man, and make herself and him look absurd? Why will she draw attention to her want of colour by wearing red or arsenic green? Why, with red hair, is her dress pink? Why, when in a very pale dress, does she lean against the wall which the barbarity of English ignorance has papered with white? Why, with black hair, does she carry a heavy burden of jet flowers, combs, and impossibly thick plaits that make her head look like an elephant's on an antelope's body? Why will she trust to the very moderate gifts nature has endowed her with, to fight against the most abnormal disadvantages? Why—why—but enough:—these are only some of the insane mistakes that nearly all girls commit, many of them girls with artistic tastes and capacities, in every direction except dress, whose eyes you may see shine with pleasure at a sunset or a beau-flower—which nevertheless they steadily refuse to take a hint from?

Very few women know what style of dress suits them best, or what colours: even those who study the art study it wrongly. One may often see a woman who has the makings of a dignified goddess *se poser en coquette*, or a little creature attempt to be stately who can only be simple. The best grace is perfect naturalness. Our manners form themselves, but we must form our setting of them. Nature can do much, but not everything. Art should do something.

You *must* choose suitable colours and suitable shapes for your dresses, you *must* study the room that you are to appear in, if you ever mean to look right; and if you know not what kind of room you are about to be seen in, or if you know that it is one of the modern white and glaring drawing-rooms, a plain black dress (but *never* with low neck and short sleeves) will always be safe.

The reason that an ordinary low neck with short sleeves looks worse

in black than in any other colour is because the hard line round the bust and arms is too great a contrast to the skin. A low neck always lessens the height, and a dark dress made thus lessens it still more, and it strikes the artistic eye as cutting the body in pieces, in this way:—If you see a fair person dressed in a low dark dress, standing against a light background some way off, the effect will be that of an



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

empty dress hung up, the face, neck, and arms being scarcely discernible (fig. 1) On the other hand, against a dark background the head and bust will be thrown up sharply, and the whole dress and body will disappear (fig. 2). This effect, often enough seen, is execrably bad. If you must wear a low black dress, let it be cut square, giving the height of the shoulders (or better, the angles rounded, for corners are very trying), and have plenty of white or pale gauze, or thin black net, to soften the harsh line between the skin and the dress. White gauze or lace softens down the blackness of the dress at the edge of the bodice, and thin black stuff has an equally good effect, as it shades the whiteness of the skin into the dark colour of the gown. *Only under these conditions* does the sudden contrast enhance, as some persons suppose, the fairness of the complexion.

Nature abhors sharp edges. We see contrasts in flowers and in marbles; but they are always softened, each colour stealing a little of the other at the junction of the two. Even the sharp edges of a crag or house against the sky are seen by a practised eye to gather some softening greyness either from the surrounding colours or by mere perspective. Trees grow thin at the edges and melt into the sky; in a prism, of course, we see the tender amalgamations of hues more distinctly, the secondaries lying clearly between the primaries. Ruskin had noticed this surely when he said, "All good colour is gradated," each mixed into the next where there are contrasts.

#### LOW DRESSES.

It is a mystery how any fashion so hideous or so unmeaning as the modern low dress ever came in. There was nothing approaching it in bareness of design, in poverty of invention, or opportunities for indecency, in the days of the finest costumes—I had almost said in

any previous age. There have been many corrupt fashions, but they have been almost always picturesque ones.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the women were sufficiently *décolletée* for such a book to be published as "A Just and Seasonable Reprehension of Naked Breasts and Shoulders," with a preface by Richard Baxter, and they were as bad in the eighteenth century; but then if the dress was not high behind, the arms were covered to the elbow—the whole effect was not so scanty and fleshy as the modern low neck and back, and shoulderstraps.

This last fashion must have been introduced gradually. Some leader of fashion who had beautiful shoulders thought it a pity they should bloom unseen, and may have pushed down the high dress accordingly. Well, if you are not shy about exposing your neck, a dress pushed open loosely is not ugly, far from it. There would be folds naturally falling in a pretty form, nearly horizontally. Probably at first the actual shoulder-joint was hidden, then, as the rage for self-display increased, and as the ladies emulated each other in it, the dress got to be entirely off the shoulder—and possibly the straight horizontal plaits round the shoulders of our mothers in their girlish days were the remnants, or an imitation, of the natural folds. Then the enterprising dressmaker soon yearned for a change of ornament, and the loose "Berthe" gradually hardened into the plain, tight, low bodice, with a still harder and more unmeaning tucker sewn in (once the close chemise), run through with a black string, from which we so long have suffered. The sleeves shrunk shorter and shorter, from the elbow rich with ruffles, to the round bell-sleeve, then to degenerate variations of it, till it narrowed into a finger-wide foundation for bows and laces, and became, finally, the detestable "strap."

Again, observe the unmeaningness of the low-neck fashion. Our mothers wore low dresses and bare arms all day long; they knew if their shoulders and arms were beautiful they would look as well by daylight as by candlelight; if, in their daily occupations, the English climate would not temper its winds to the shorn lambs or limbs of fashion, they tucked in a kerchief, or fastened on long sleeves in the morning. Why, the servant-maids wore low-dresses too, at that time. There was some sense *then* in throwing off the kerchief in the evening, when there was nothing harder to be done than chatting in a warm drawing-room, and exposing as much of the body as it was fashionable to display above what we may call the Bran. It was not unmeaning then. In those days people were only just recovering from the extraordinary classic mania of 1794, under the influence of David the painter. There was not a vestige of crinoline, not too many petticoats, and no folds; and as the entire form and action of the body were distinguishable, a lady had to be very careful how she crossed her legs, lolled on sofas, or ran across a room. To do such things gracefully was the study of every girl; hence, walking and



entering a room, taking a seat, &c., were practised under artistes, as we have since practised the rapid steps of modern round dances. We are at the present day adhering to a form whose motive and spirit departed seventy years ago; we have lost its careful grace, and retained its doubtful delicacy, and added an ugliness of our own, which our grandmothers were quite innocent of. The crinolines have superseded all our attention to posture; and the long trains, which can hardly look inelegant even on clumsy persons, make small ankles or thick ones a matter of little moment. We have become inexpressibly slovenly. Our fashionable women stride and loll in open defiance of elegance; we no longer study how to walk, perhaps the most difficult of all steps to do gracefully. If they patronise crinoline, they jump coquettishly in their "balloons," so that these leap up as though on springs; push by chairs, forgetful that crinolines bend up behind and reveal their uncared-for boots, not to say stockings. They know not, nor do they care, that men smile at such want of caution, and attribute it to other motives than that of complete and utter slovenliness. Our women are most blind and stupid followers of fashions still imposed upon them, Heaven only knows wherefore and by whom.

#### FURNITURE AND DRESS.

I suppose in the happy days for artists, when there were panelled oak walls and carved window-seats, every one looked well against them, and perhaps these very walls had an indirect influence in moulding the fashions; for the constantly observing even a bit of grained oak may cultivate the eye in some measure unconsciously; but the oak, from being of a pale colour, darkened with age, and in about a hundred years from the time when it was put up, the extreme darkness of the rooms, especially in towns, with the black walls and low ceilings, drove the inmates in self-defence to light tints somewhere. Now as shaving the wood or repaneling would have been far too expensive a process for our thrifty ancestors, they generally took the simple means of white-washing their walls and ceilings, and so first let in the demon of white ugliness who has at last lured most of us into his snare. Are not white walls and ceilings to be found everywhere?

Now, in a white room, when the eye is unaccustomed to it, one can scarcely for a time distinguish forms and textures. The pale glare takes the gloss out of silks, and habituates the taste to pallid colours and an absence of shadows. And when use has brought the eye back to its original perceptive power, there is the chance that the white will have done its woeful work; the "favourite" colours will be found greatly heightened, without any regard to complexion or propinquity, and the fashionable shapes more *prononcés* and grotesque. No one but old Father Time, with an infinite compassion, is brave enough to tone down our glaring white, to dim our dazzling blues, our raw greens, and warp our contorted shapes into something more easy and graceful.

The whole style of our modern furniture, as well as our modern dress, is largely due to these terrible white walls. Unlimited cheap gilding came in, *glacé* silks and satins came in, the very designs for furniture we see all about us, coarse, florid, and conspicuous—are all due to the white walls. Everything to “tell” against them must be of this kind, gaudy and “loud.” I am not depreciating all the good done by the introduction of wall papers, which have been getting paler and paler, and shinier and shinier every year; I am not even depreciating the wholesome delight in “cleanness,” and the advantages of being able to see when dust accumulates; but I am convinced that the whitewash upon our oak was the commencement of our artistic deterioration, and we are only now beginning to see how great that deterioration has been.

How it was that in the ancient days—when cleanliness had not come into fashion—when carpets were not, but floors were covered with rushes and strewn with rejected bones and wine lees—when forks and pocket-handkerchiefs did not exist—and when people were recommended in the directions of etiquette of the period to inspect the very seats in noble halls before they sat on them—

“Se aucune chose y verras

Qui soit deshonneste ou vilaine;” (15th century)\*—

how it was that in those days people could have indulged to the extent they did indulge in quaint conceits of dress—flowing trains edged with rich furs, delicate veils that fell to the feet, and trailing sleeves of cloth of gold or velvet—I cannot tell. At that time windows were few and small, chimneys had only just come into general use, and the walls of the low rooms were entirely bare, mere brick or stone, save for here and there in rich houses, a “hanging of worsted”—the tapestry we now see in our museums—or a very rude stencilled decoration. Costly and graceful dresses seem to us strangely out of place, even for high days and festivals, in such abodes. And yet this was the period of the greatest and most profuse magnificence of attire in England, as it was that of the richest and most gorgeous architecture, and many of the most beautiful and artistic shapes and patterns. Perhaps the darkness and bareness of the interiors made the eye crave, in spite of their dirt, for brightness of some sort to refresh it at any cost, and so the people's garments were made rich and varied, as an unconscious atonement for the lack of furniture and light and beauty about them. They were in fact the only furniture and attraction within the massive granite walls. Now, when an ordinary dwelling-house is handsomer, cleaner, and more comfortable than the royal palace was in 1400, we make ourselves subservient to the rooms in which we live—we are content to be always secondary, sometimes imperceptible in our glittering saloons which we cannot out-glitter. Then again we endeavour to eclipse the bad taste of our mural decoration with the worse taste of our ignorant

\* See Wright's “Manners and Sentiments of the Middle Ages.”

self-adornment from the sheer necessity of being visible ; we become conspicuous without grace, and expensive without beauty.

#### SOME OLD DRESSES.

There have been many exquisite costumes in vogue in England that we might imitate, if we cannot invent better ones. Perhaps one of the most elegantly shaped dresses ever seen was that worn in Edward III.'s reign—a plain gown fitting the figure, cut in one almost from the low throat to the end of the train. The sleeves were a variation of that sensible old Spanish hanging sleeve, which was originally meant as an upper sleeve, to be slipped upon the arm for out-door wear, and slipped off for lightness' sake within-doors, when it hung as a simple ornament from the shoulder ; open from the top, with loops and buttons along the edge for closing it upon the arm, partly or entirely, as the wearer chose ; for sometimes it was closed downwards to the elbow, sometimes at the lower part only, leaving the middle part open, to show the under-sleeve, which was a close one, reaching the hand, and decorated with cuffs or curious needlework. A few years ago there was an attempt to introduce a dress similarly cut all in one, without a seam at the waist or fullness of any kind ; but it soon disappeared, because there were so few figures perfect enough to set it off. At the period of which I speak (fourteenth century) rich belts were worn ; but so desirous were the ladies of preserving the unbroken outline of the whole figure, that the belt was never placed around the waist, but always somewhat below, about the hips. This was far more pretty and picturesque than the pinched waist now in vogue, with the sudden breadth at the hips of innumerable plaits and gathers.

This graceful dress saw the birth and death of many enormities in the way of head-gear and foot-gear, and survived the great period of horns, borrowed from the East and exaggerated, and of long-pointed shoes, which at last dragged their slow length up to the garter. It gave place after a time to the hideous but convenient farthingale, which, while courts are immoral, always *will* come in again and again for the same reasons, and which grew more and more monstrous until, about 1615, it went out for a time, and was gradually replaced by the picturesque and graceful negligence which characterised the court of Charles II., and which Lely has immortalised.

The Puritan rigidity of taste and hatred of frivolity, whose stiff and formal costume we see preserved in the liveries of many charity schools in our own day, had doubtless a powerful influence upon the dress of the period, though throughout the troubles of the Protectorate there were many who adhered, in spite of everything, to the old fashions of long hair and laced collars, and were ever ready to exclaim with Sir Toby Belch, "What, dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale ?" Exclusive of the Puritan costume pure and simple, this general feeling was probably

instrumental in exterminating the great wheel farthingale and stiff coloured ruff still worn during Charles I.'s reign, and traces of Puritanism may be seen even in the loose and voluminous dresses of 1660.

In William III.'s reign the costumes were still picturesque, though they had run to the opposite extreme of starch and buckram, and though, as women will be women, they from time to time burst into abnormal and uncomfortable extravagances—such as imitations of male attire, shooting crests, and unearthly wigs; and though hoops had time to appear again (1746) in a huger and more ridiculous shape than ever the old farthingale had assumed (being, in addition to their enormous width, often of eight yards, caught up on each side, and drawn in behind and before, so as richly to merit the witty nickname of the time, *l'âne avec deux paniers*, from the similar appearance of a lady to that oppressed animal!), yet the buckram was the parent of the most beautiful (in its perfect state) costume that ever set off a beautiful woman—the dress immortalized by Watteau—sacks, trains, and powder.

#### HAIR-POWDER AND WIGS.

No doubt hair-powder and wigs were carried ultimately to great excesses, both as regards uncleanness and extravagance of arrangement. The hair, from being simply and tastefully arranged, rose into mountains of wool, pomades, and meal; and there is no question that through the extreme and increasing difficulty of erecting them, as well as the expense of hairdressing, ladies frequently combed and brushed their hair but once in eight, or even twelve weeks, sleeping in calashes or caps large enough to contain the greasy piles, and on the eve of balls scarcely at all; for in the season the manifold engagements of the hairdresser made it necessary to employ him days before the event, if notice had not been sent him sufficiently early for him to appoint a later date. The horrible results of these habits may be better imagined than described.

For all that, let it be remembered, there is nothing in the world so becoming as grey hair-powder, both to old and young. It softens the whole face, gives a strange brilliancy to the eyes and complexion, and makes the eyebrows and eyelashes appear much darker than they really are. These considerations probably account for the length of time during which it continued in fashion.

There is another fashion which has generally gone hand-in-hand with hair-powder, and which came in vogue during the reign of Charles I., and continued up to the beginning of the last century. The *patch*, as it first came in, was one of the most harmless and effective aids to beauty ever invented. It was but a tiny mole-like spot of black velvet or silk, which was used to draw attention to some particular feature, as well as to enhance, by contrast, the fairness of the cheek. Thus, if a girl was conscious of a pretty dimple in her chin, or of long eyebrows; if her forehead formed the best

part of her face, or her mouth—she cunningly placed the little patch near it, and consequently every time you looked at her your eye was insensibly drawn by the patch to the best feature, so that you partly forgot any less handsome detail. To an accustomed eye, the patch gives a singular finish to the toilette; it is like the seal on a letter or the frame to a picture. You see the grey powdered curls and the bright eyes, and the low, luxurious bodice, and the ribbon necklet around the throat—and, if the patch be absent, it is instantly missed, and the whole toilette seems incomplete. This crafty little piece of vanity was afterwards vulgarised of course, and the tiny round spot was transformed into a star or a crescent, that increased in size and multiplied in number—blind vanity forgot that in trying to draw attention to all her features at once, she drew attention to *none*; and, later on, it ran into such absurd extremes that ships, chariots and horses, and other devices in black paper, began to disfigure the female visage, and at last the whole face was bespattered with vulgar shapes, having no meaning, except sometimes a political one, and being of no value to beauty whatever, and then the degraded fashion died a natural death. There is a picture by Coypel, in the Louvre at Paris, of a lady whose face is positively blurred, effaced, by large patches of various patterns, five in number, in which it is easy to see how *many* patches defeat the aim of *one*. It is indeed amazing how any such fashion so foolish could have been ever followed even for a single season.

It was about 1780 that the heads of the ladies were at their biggest. They had been steadily growing for some years, and according to the published directions for hairdressing by the fashionable barbers of the period, they rose rapidly from "one foot" to "three feet high." Many of Reynolds's portraits show the hair rising two feet above the face, and these probably are moderated and idealised. Of course no human hair could cover a cushion as tall as this, and proportionably wide; the monstrous curls and rolls were, therefore, chiefly false, and additionally trimmed with "ten yards of ribbon," ropes of beads, artificial flowers, immense plumes of ostrich feathers and scarfs of gauze, as well as other ornaments, and—the acme of bad taste—models in glass of ships, horses and chariots, caterpillars, litters of pigs, and many more. In 1787 the unclean towers fell, and it became fashionable to arrange the hair in a looser and certainly more tasteful style—large curls to the waist, unpowdered, ornamented by a gauze kerchief and flowers, as Greuze painted them.

The full buffont, whose chief aim seems to have been to make a woman look like a pouter pigeon, then came in (1790), and was worn across the chest, and the rest of the dress—jacket, sleeves, and skirt—became as bare of trimming and of beauty as could be wished even by our modern taste. In 1795 hair-powder disappeared for good in consequence of Mr. Pitt's tax upon it; waists three inches long were intro-

duced, at first with long skirts and trains, then with short ones with no folds—perhaps quite the most hideous and pernicious fashion ever in vogue; cancer in the breast, and all forms of influenza were the commonest result; and the French artist, James Louis David, then a young man of twenty-five, whose talent in art, and whose political enthusiasm, as well as his intense devotion to the Antique, made him a celebrity in Paris, has to answer for many absurdities in the dress of the period throughout the miseries and storms of the Reign of Terror.

#### WAISTS AND SKIRTS.

The French Revolution had naturally a very strong effect on the dress of the people, which must always be a reflection of the people's minds; and the scenes of bloodshed, whose horrors were hardly forgotten when Paris was again shaken by the civil war of 1870, resulted in a modification of the corrupt luxury of that day to a simpler style of living. The redundant forms of furniture were changed into the straight-backed, comfortless, almost seatless chairs still approved by our grandmothers: the classical taste, under David's direction, soon pervaded all classes, and we owe to it a great deal of our modern ugliness. The eccentric mania was carried to such lengths, that at balls the *merveilleuses* of Paris appeared in flesh-coloured drawers, with imitations of the Greek stola above, and sandals, attached by ribbons to the naked feet, while their tresses were confined by fillets à l'antique. The men also began the tight elastic drawers to the ankle (many are the funny stories of accidents at parties, when dancing burst the strap beneath the foot, and the garments flew up to the thigh), square-tailed coats with high collars, "their hair plaited on the forehead and flowing down behind, or turned up and fixed with a comb."\*

All the new fashions that were introduced at that time seemed to result in ugliness. To the influence of the Revolution we owe the prevalence of the chimney-pot hat, whose discomfort and ugliness have earned for it among the witty Germans the slang name of "*anguish pipe*" (*Angst-röhre*) as well as the bird-like dress-coat, both of which are confessed by all members of the "strong sex" who have ever tried any other costume, to be the most disagreeable and uncomfortable of all known inventions in clothing, but which they have been weak enough to endure for just a hundred years.

When the classic wonders subsided, the waists grew longer again, and the attire of that time is sufficiently described on page 81. The habitual bare shoulders and arms, long waist, with a broad tight belt, short scanty skirts, flat shoes, with ribbons, still retaining the name of "sandals," and mighty bonnets, may be seen in the woodcuts of any old magazine or other work.

M. E. H.

(To be continued.)

\* See Fairholt's "Costume in England," *passim*.

## OFF THE SKELLIGS.

By JEAN INGELOW.

### CHAPTER I.

"There were giants in the earth in those days."

GENESIS vi. 4.

"Seigneur! préservez-moi, préservez ceux que j'aime.  
Frères, parens, amis, et mes ennemis même,  
Dans le mal triomphants,  
De jamais voir, seigneur! l'été sans fleurs vermeilles,  
La cage sans oiseaux, la ruche sans abeilles,  
La maison sans enfans!"

VICTOR HUGO.

My father's house stood in a quiet country town, through which a tidal river flowed. The banks of the river were flanked by wooden wharves, which were supported on timbers, and projected over the water. They had granaries behind them, and one of my earliest pleasures was to watch the gangs of men who at high tide towed vessels up the river, where, being moored before these granaries, cargoes of corn were shot down from the upper stories into their holds, through wooden troughs not unlike fire-escapes. The back of my father's house was on a level with the wharves, and overlooked a long reach of the river. Our nursery was a low room in the roof, having a large bow window, in the old-fashioned seat of which I spent many a happy hour with my brother, sometimes listening to the soft hissing sound made by the wheat in its descent, sometimes admiring the figure-heads of the vessels, or laboriously spelling out the letters of their names.

When the tide was low there was fresh pleasure. Then we could watch the happy little boys who, with trousers tucked above their knees, used to wade among the piles, which were all green with sea-grass, and bristling with barnacles. We could see them picking up empty shells and bits of drift-wood in the yellowish mud; or sometimes one of them would discover an old pot or kettle, on which he would drum and play uncouth music. Joyous urchins! I was too complete a baby to envy them, but I thought how grand a lot was theirs!

I had a brother two years older than myself. Before I could speak, he had taught me my letters, and I used to pick them up and present them to him as he called for them. Of course he was a tiny child at the time, but to me he appeared very large. Nothing has changed to me since babyhood, so much as opinions concerning



size and height. Truly "there were giants in the earth in those days." All grown-up people appeared to me to be nearly of a size;—my father was a giant, my mother was a giantess, my brother was large, knowing, old, and never sufficiently to be respected; rose-trees were trees indeed, and no bushes then! I pulled the roses down to smell them, and I put up my finger into the flowers of the tall tiger lilies as I stood on tiptoe under them, and regarded the dark dust that came off upon it as something remarkable, procured from a higher sphere. When my nurse took me up in her arms, oh what pleasure to see the things on the table—to look down on that distant place the floor, and see my little sister creeping there!

A report reached me one day (not, however, from a trustworthy source, for it was our little housemaid who brought it to me)—a report to the effect that *once* I had been a little baby like her! That must have been a long time ago, I thought. I pondered on it, but it seemed unlikely, and I did not believe it.

But as the rich go from their town houses to their country seats, and as the Vicar of Wakefield and Mrs. Primrose migrated from the blue bed to the brown, so we had our periodical changes. Life in the nursery was well enough, but life in the best bedroom smacked of the sublime.

The nursery being in the roof, and facing south, became glowing hot towards afternoon; but in the front of the house was a large delightful room with closed shutters, into which, on our promise to be quiet, our nurse would often take us, and, folding back one of the shutters, allow us to admire the chintz curtains, all gay with apple-boughs and goldfinches flying with spread wings. Then she would let us climb on to the window-seat, and there we enjoyed hours of contemplation and hours of talk unintelligible to any but ourselves.

What a world those windows opened out to us! They looked into the minster-yard. It was smooth and paved with flag-stones, and in its midst rose the great brown minster, the old minster, that was full of little holes, and had a bird's head peeping out of each.

Oh, to see the rooks and starlings poised on the swaying weather-cocks, to hear the great clock give warning, to listen to the bells, and shout to each other while their clashing voices hummed and buzzed around us and over us; to see the clergymen walking in to prayers, and all the bluecoat boys and girls trooping after them; to watch the father-rooks as they flew home with wriggling worms in their mouths; to see the little starlings creep out of their holes, and sit in a row pecking and wrangling, these were sights indeed! When shall pleasures for grown-up folks be found to match them?

My brother was the hero of my history and the being whom I imitated to the utmost of my power. He was a very remarkable child, and had such a retentive memory, that as soon as he could

speak he could learn by heart anything that was repeated slowly to him, whether he understood it or not.

Our father, perceiving his extraordinary precocity, was very proud of him, and taught him several scenes from Shakespeare, which he used to let him act, making him stamp, frown, and use all kinds of appropriate gestures, and exciting him by praises and rewards. He little knew the mischief that he was doing by forcing such a brain. On the contrary, he thought education could not begin too early, and, not content with the progress his child made at home, he sent him at four years old to a lady, who engaged to "bring him forward." Under her teaching he mastered reading very quickly, and, reading once learned, vain would have been the attempt to keep him back in other things. He loved best a large old edition of Shakespeare, and our nurse used to let him carry it up into the nursery, because poring over it kept him so quiet.

Every scene that he liked he learned—fighting and slaying scenes were his favourites, and when he knew them by heart he would shut up the folio, stand upon it, and begin to act, while I, being the audience, sat on the floor, and stared admiringly. He would pretend to cry, would hold out his little hand with a menacing air, then fall down on the floor with a solemn face and a deep sigh, which gave me to understand that he was dead, and that his enemies had killed him.

All this my brother did, and learned over and above what he was taught by the lady to whom he was sent for instruction, and my mother never discovered it, otherwise, I believe, she would have found some less dangerous amusement for him. But she was very delicate, and we seldom saw her; for she could not endure the least noise, and constantly suffered from headache.

At last, one day "Snap"—for that was the only name by which I knew him, this sound having been the first my baby lips had uttered in their apprenticeship to the art of talking—Snap was seen by me lying on his little bed, the doctor standing on one side and my mother on the other.

I was not distinctly sorry for Snap, as, not understanding why he was to be pitied—he was not crying—consequently I did not think he could be hurt; but I wanted to kiss him. Therefore I crept up to his bed and patted his face; but he did not wake. Something nice was brought to him to eat; but as he would not have it they gave it to me, and I ate it for him. A long time after this Snap got up again; his hair was very short, and he could not walk, but used to creep on his hands and knees like our little sister. I thought this very droll, and tried to imitate him; but he soon learned to walk again, and then we thought it very strange when nurse told us that he was not to go to school any more for a long time, not to have Shakespeare, and not to learn anything at all.

Snap cried when the great Shakespeare was carried out of the nursery, and he often wearied of looking out of the windows at the ships and at the minster. At last, having absolute need of something to do, he bethought himself, as I suppose, that it would be a desirable thing to make an occupation of me, and every day he taught me scenes and songs, making me a willing little slave, and being kind to me on the whole, though he felt a natural disgust at my not being able to speak plainly; for I lisped, after the fashion of very young children, and sometimes wished to lie down on the floor and go to sleep in the middle of his lesson.

Every day after we had dined our dear mamma would come into the nursery and inquire whether we were good, putting her white hand to her brow, and saying, wearily, "I hope my boy is quiet, nurse, and not doing anything particular?"

"Bless me, no, ma'am," the answer would be. "The children are at play together." Then she would go down again, and Snap would begin his daily lesson to me.

Every alternate day the old physician would appear with mamma, and call Snap to come and stand before him. He seldom looked satisfied, and often said, "I hope this child has not been excited."

"I cannot do more to prevent excitement," our mother would reply. "I never let him learn anything. I never have him down stairs with me. I quite debar myself the pleasure of my children's society."

"Quite right, ma'am," the old physician used to answer; "keep him quiet, and he will be a man yet."

At last one day, about six months after Snap's illness, they came in when we were in very high spirits, chasing one another round the nursery, and the physician said to nurse, with a displeased countenance, "How now, my good woman—is this the sort of order you keep here?"

"How can I help their playing about, sir?" she answered coldly.

"Their playing about I do not so much object to," he replied; "but I must protest against the boy's spouting Shakespeare so noisily all the time."

This good doctor had a strong north-country accent, but I do not think I should have remembered him and his speeches so well, if my brother had not been in the habit of acting over what he had said, and imitating his accent when he retired.

"And the little girl looks very much excited too," he said on this occasion. "I hope her brain is not forced by over-teaching."

"She has never been taught anything in her life," said my mother. "She is in a state of complete ignorance."

"She could not be in a better state, ma'am, at her tender age."

"No," observed nurse, "missy has had no book learning; but

ma'am, did you know that she could do that play-acting nearly as well as Master Graham?"

I remember that my mother looked aghast on hearing this, and that Snap performed a dance of triumph about her chair.

"Could I do acting?" asked the physician.

"Oh, yes," I replied, and I began to pucker up my little face into one of Snap's favourite tragic frowns, and to stamp about the nursery.

The doctor laughed and said, "Pooh." I was very much surprised, for I had been told that it was rude to say pooh.

But while I wondered at him and his great red cheeks and his glossy shoes, Snap said, "Missy can say Brutus and Cassius, can't you, missy? I taught her, mamma. I make her say it every day."

"Yes, I can say Bruty and Cassy," I replied, with smiling pride in the fact. That was a dagger to my mother's heart.

"Well, well, let us hear it, then," said the doctor; and after a short altercation between me and Snap, during which I insisted that I must have my pinafore taken off, and put on the paper cap which he called a helmet, I was placed upon the table, while my brother, shuffling in a manner which was intended to represent the footsteps of the Roman citizens, exclaimed, "The noble Brutus is ascended—silence!" and I began in my baby dialect, "Romans, countrymen, and lovers——"

Probably the doctor did not understand much of my speech, for I was not more forward with my tongue than most children of my age; but he looked amazed, while I, changing from Brutus to Antony, went on exclaiming and gesticulating, while Snap, as a rabble of Roman citizens drummed on the table and stamped. I stopped short at—"There burst his mighty heart;" for to my astonishment I saw that poor mamma was sobbing and crying most bitterly. They took me down, and stroking her hand I said, "Never mind, mamma, don't cry, Cæsar was a naughty man."

She took me on her knee and wept as if her heart would break. Snap then came up and testified concern and amazement. "This is a blow, ma'am, certainly," said the good old doctor; "but you must bear up against it as bravely as you can."

"Oh, nurse," sobbed my mother, "I trusted you; how could you deceive me?"

"I did not intend, ma'am, to deceive you," replied nurse; "I never gave it a thought that their play could hurt them, and I am sure missy has never had a day's illness in her life. Nothing Master Graham has taught her can possibly have hurt her."

After this we were taken out for a walk, and nurse said we had been naughty. We supposed we had, and we noticed that whenever from that time we asked the young nursemaid any question and she was inclined to answer it, nurse would say, "Hold your tongue,

Maria, you know the children is not to know anything whatsoever."

One night, however, when nurse was gone down-stairs, I asked Maria why we were not to know anything, and she said, "Did I remember seeing those three pretty little graves in St. Mark's church-yard, where my three little sisters were?"

I said, "Oh, yes; I remembered them very well."

"Did I wish to stay with papa and mamma and Master Snap, or did I wish to go, and be with them?"

I thought I should like to stay.

"Then," she said, "you must never do any play-acting, nor learn anything that Master Snap wants to teach you; or else you will be obliged to go, as your little sisters did."

Snap always said his prayers before he went to bed, and I knelt beside him, and said the same words. I knew that there was a God, and that God was in heaven; that, I think, was the extent of my knowledge, till one day, while out walking, Snap and I passed a shop where some books were exposed for sale; they were old books, and in one which lay open was a print which represented some people standing in flames, under a thing like the arch of a bridge.

I asked Snap what that was. He answered, in a whisper, that it was the place where wicked people were put, after they were dead. But I was not to tell nurse that he had said so, because she would be so very angry, as I was not to know anything.

Every day, when we passed that shop, I stood on tiptoe to look at this dreadful, but fascinating picture; and at night, when I was put to bed, I thought about it. I asked Snap if it did not frighten him to think of it? But he said no; he never thought of it at all.

So now there were two things in the world to be afraid of; at least, when one happened to think of them! The least formidable was this picture, the most so was the ghost of *Cæsar*, which inhabited, as I supposed, a certain square closet in a room called the green bedroom, a closet which I never liked to see opened even in the broadest daylight, till my nurse's married sister, coming over to spend the day with her, and, hearing of this fancy of mine, carried me into it in her arms, showed me every crevice in the boards, and let me peep into every box it contained; and, still keeping me in her arms, gave me a nice piece of cake to eat within its dreaded precincts. After that, wherever the ghost of *Cæsar* might be, I felt sure that it was not there.

About six months after this our nurse left us, and a young woman took her place who was a daughter of one of the sextons of the minster. She had not been many weeks with us when my mother continuing very unwell, papa took her away, and we did not see them again for a very long time. They were gone on the Continent, we were told, and what the Continent might be I never thought of inquiring.

Snap was now quite well, and, under the gentle dominion of our new nurse, we were very happy. She had one habit which procured for us many delightful hours. She liked to go into the minster, and talk to her father while he was sweeping and cleaning it. Sometimes other people were there, to whom she talked, and, while she did so, Snap and I crept admiringly about, among the old carved work, stole into the pulpit, and peered down from it; got into the organ gallery, and saw the angels puffing their cheeks as they blew the trumpets; and the little cherubs, so smiling and happy—no wonder, when each had got a beautiful pipe of his own to play upon! Then we would go into the vestry, and feel the great clamps of the parish chests, and look into the closet, where the long white surplices were, which Snap said were the sort of gowns that ghosts always wore.

Then we would steal, hand in hand, into the rich, sunny, west end of the minster. Here was a great window, an ancient one, full of prophets and kings; some on chairs, some on thrones, and some in the open country. A wonderful country this was, with trees like the trees in our Noah's ark, and hills that went straight up to heaven, as might be seen by the angels that stood upon them. That they correctly represented the country they pictured I did not in the least doubt, any more than that all the prophets and kings were portraits, and good ones! Consequently, when I saw "Noah" written under one of them (for I could read by this time, Snap having surreptitiously taught me a good deal), when, as I say, I saw "Noah," I never doubted that he had, as there represented, yellow hair; and when I afterwards saw a picture of the Deluge, in which that patriarch was represented with dark locks, I thought what an ignorant person he must be that had painted it.

Of the old sexton we soon became very fond, and he was equally fond of us; therefore it was not wonderful that his daughter should often have brought us to him when she wanted to go out and enjoy herself, and left us till it suited her business or pleasure to come back again.

She always took little Amy, our sister, with her. She had been left by our parents in sole charge of us, and immediately abused the liberty that she suddenly found in her power. We were never the worse for it, so she by degrees left us more and more, and I have little doubt that the quiet old sexton, her father, was a far better guardian for us than she was.

About this time a personage came upon the stage of our lives, who was known to the world as the Rev. Charles Mompesson, but by me known only by the name of Mompey. He was, when first I knew him, as young as he could be to be in orders; for, as I learned afterwards, he came to the place where we lived for a title.

Mompey was exceedingly good to us, especially to me, whom he carried about as if I had been a doll, took me up the tower stairs in

his arms, and showed Snap and me the great bells when they were ringing, and filling the whole chamber with a humming noise, as if all the bees in the world were swarming there, and let us put our fingers into the holes where the jackdaws and the sparrows build, and feel how warm their eggs were.

He was good, delightful, and beautiful. People who love children are generally endowed by them with this last attribute. Our eyes were influenced by our hearts, and we admired him so much that sometimes we could not help saying to him when he smiled on us, "O Mompey, how beautiful you are!" Upon these occasions he would sometimes tell us that other people did not agree with us in opinion, and I do not doubt the correctness of his words, for he had slightly prominent teeth, which helped to increase the sweet expression of his amiable face, but certainly destroyed the regularity of the features; and, moreover, his face was slightly, very slightly, marked with small-pox. The manner of his introduction to us was this.

Snap used to personate the characters that he saw in pictures, and being one day greatly fascinated with the oddity of a figure in one of the side lights of the minster, he sat before it on a bench, trying to give his face its strange expression, and no doubt succeeded, for he had marvellous powers of imitation. The figure—that of a saint in a blue baldrie—sat on a high chair, with its legs hanging down, but not reaching the ground, and its feet, in their pointed shoes, serenely crossed. Its hands were also crossed, and lightly held a long willow branch, while its head, hanging affectedly on one side, wore a smile, half innocent, half foolish. Snap got a willow branch, a thing easily procured from the sexton's little garden, and was sitting in the full enjoyment of his mimicry before the painted window, when Mr. Mompesson passed down the aisle. He stopped and stared, then laughed with irrepressible amusement. The imitation was too ridiculously good not to be perceived in an instant.

Snap did not stir a muscle. In fact, he by no means supposed his personification to be absurd; he was only obeying the strong artistic feeling within him.

"Who is this?" said Mr. Mompesson. "What, in the name of wonder, is the child doing?"

Upon this I, rising from the mat on which I had been sitting admired my brother, exclaimed, in my childish, piping voice—

"That's Snap; you must not speak to him now, because he's a mediæval saint."

"Oh, he is, is he?" said Mr. Mompesson. "Here, Wilson, Wilson."

Wilson, the sexton, soon appeared, and Mr. Mompesson said—

"Wilson, look at this! These little children cannot possibly be allowed to make a play-room of the minster."



Wilson, as I remember, looked foolish, and replied that we never did any mischief; and as for the little boy, he "reckoned that he was a kind of *natural*."

"But they have never played here before, for all that," he proceeded; "leastways, not to *say* play."

Snap by this time had got down from his bench, and when he heard this last remark, he opened his eyes wide, and cried out—

"Oh—oh, didn't you tell me to play at Brutus yesterday, and missy was Lucius, and wouldn't let Brutus wake her, but lay down and shut up her eyes quite tight? And didn't you and Tarrant and Smith say it was just like a theatre?"

"You didn't," said Wilson, reddening.

"We did," retorted Snap; "and Smith said, 'Lord, how queer,' and I said he ought not to say so."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Mompesson.

Snap pointed with his willow wand at the Commandments, which were painted in gold and red and blue under the east window. "It says there that you mustn't take the Lord's name in vain," he observed; and I wondered what he meant, though, true to my habit, I remembered his words all the more readily because I did not understand them; what was known might be rubbed from the tablets of memory like a settled sum, but what was unknown remained to be worked out.

Mr. Mompesson repeated to Wilson that we were not to play in the minster any more, and asked us if we knew why. Snap was silent. I said "No;" whereupon he took me up in his arms, and said good little children came to church to pray to God, and be taught how to please Him. It was only naughty little children who came there to play.

A puzzling assertion this to a child in whose mind was fixed the belief that it was good to play, and not good to do anything else whatever.

Mr. Mompesson took us home with him to his lodgings, and while he dined we sat beside him, making ourselves very much at home, and partaking of some radishes. This parlour was an odd but a desirable abode; it had seven sides, and one of its narrow windows looked on the minster roof. It had been anciently part of a monastic house, and had carved work about it, which resembled that in the nave. From the window we looked at the many grotesque heads which adorned the flying buttresses of this said nave. Some of these had open mouths, and these the charitable sparrows had crammed with straw and gorged with tender nestlings; others had shut mouths, and seemed to leer at the young sparrows and reprove their quarrelsome behaviour.

Snap and I were very happy in that little room, and I have no doubt we were exceedingly queer children, for I remember how we

made our host laugh that evening. Another young clergyman came in to see Mompy before we went away, and he also laughed, specially when Snap and I pretended to be mediæval saints.

"The boy is a fine little fellow," I heard him say; "but as for the girl, she is all eyes."

When I heard that, I thought how shocking it was to be "all eyes," and how good it was of papa and mamma to love me notwithstanding.

## CHAPTER II.

*(Enter the ghost of Cæsar.)*

*Brutus.* Is not the leaf turned down

Where I left reading? There it is I think.

How ill this taper burns.—Ha! who comes here?

I think it is the weakness of mine eyes;

That shapes this monstrous apparition—

It comes upon me.

AFTER this we often saw Mr. Mompesson, and if I had not been reminded of the picture by those grotesque heads which we could see from his window, I should have been very happy.

As it was, there were occasions when a vivid fear of it would suddenly come up and overshadow my infant heart. I used then to creep behind the curtains of Snap's bed and cover my face with my hands, sometimes shaking in all my limbs till I gave way to a passion of screaming and crying.

I never told any one what it was that frightened me, because my mother had said that I was not to know anything, consequently I thought I ought not to know this.

One day, however, when I was playing in Mr. Mompesson's room, I remembered those ugly faces, and crept up to him for protection, hiding my face in the folds of his gown, for he had just come in from the minster, and was standing against a desk writing. He gave what he had written to a man who stood waiting for it, and then he took me upon his knee.

I was cold; he warmed my hands in his large palm, and enquired whether anything was the matter, asking me if I was happy. I said "No," and when he asked why, I can remember that I shook my head and said I must not tell him. He, however, repeated the question, and at last I confided to him, as a great secret, that there was a place where wicked men were put when they died, and that I had seen a picture of it.

I whispered this to him with confidential earnestness, and on hearing it he started and coloured with that fine blush of shame sometimes seen on the faces of ingenuous young men. Perhaps he felt

that such ignorance was a reproach to him, for he had kept us a great deal with him, and had only thought of amusing us.

He asked me if I ever said my prayers, and I answered, "Oh yes," and kneeled on his knee repeating them to him. After this I think I inquired of him whether the picture did not make him unhappy also, and he answered as Snap had done, "Oh no." "Did he ever think about it, then?" I asked. He said he did, but that he was going out to see a poor man, and if I liked I might go with him and play while he was in the cottage. Then after that he would talk to me, and tell me why he was not afraid; in short, he would tell me a beautiful story. I went with him in high glee. Our road lay through a timber-yard, some way out of the small town: one side of it was shaded by a wood, and there were long piles of timber heaped up in this yard; and there were empty saw-pits, and sheds where the saw-dust lay and dry.

I had often played with my brother and walked along the piles of timber. Mompy found a specially great pile, stretched himself upon it, and began to tell me the promised story.

I had often heard stories before, but never one so beautiful and so wonderful as this. It was about a man whose name was Adam, and he lived in a garden, and he had a beautiful wife.

I do not, of course, remember the words in which he arrayed the marvellous, mysterious history, but they must have been suited to my infant understanding, for this most wonderful of all stories but one presented visions to me of beauty that I had not imagined before, and of happiness indescribable. To live in a garden, and such a garden! I thought how kind it was of God to give it them, and then I questioned the narrator about the soft, shining rivers, and the grass all velvet-like, with moss, the trees covered with citrons, and overhung with grapes; birds, also, singing on the branches, and not afraid when Adam and Eve drew nigh.

"Might Eve gather the flowers?" I inquired. "Might she gather as many as she liked?"

"Oh yes, God made them to grow on purpose for Adam and for Eve, and as long as they were good they were to live in that beautiful garden."

Still, when I look back on that now distant day, the vision of Eden rises up before me as I saw it then, with lucid rivers slipping on beneath the flowering trees, and angels with long white wings moving about by the beautiful man and woman, or waiting till the voice of God should be heard in the cool of the day.

I listened like one fascinated, questioning him again and again, and then he began to tell about the fair glittering serpent—how it tempted our first mother under the mysterious tree, and when I saw how it would end I said, "*Oh don't let Eve gather the apple,*" and I hid my face among the daisies, and began to cry.

But I soon got up again, dried my eyes, and asked—

“Did she really take the apple which God said she was not to have?”

“Yes,” Mr. Mompesson answered, “she did.”

How sorry I was for them. I heard how they were torn away from that happy place, and pitied them both, but my heart ached most for Eve. I thought the stones must have cut her feet, and I wondered whether Adam ever forgave her for persuading him to eat the apple.

“She was very unkind,” I remember saying, “for now we had to live in a place not half so beautiful, and it was all her fault.”

“It did not signify,” he answered, “God loved us though he had been displeased.”

When he had been to see the poor man, he would tell me the rest of the story. So he went through the little copse to the cottage, leaving me to play among the piles of wood. There was fine soft grass growing there, and there were just within the wood several young hawthorn trees, covered with bloom. I had still some misgivings as to whether it did not hurt Eve's feet to walk on the grass in Eden, so I took off my shoes and socks, and ran about among the daisies and the buttercups.

It was a most delightful sensation that of walking about with bare feet. I enjoyed it that day for the first and last time. Now I was quite sure that Eve had been really happy in the garden, and as I stepped about over the grass, which was warm and glowing with the afternoon sun, I personated Eve in my childish heart, and stood under a May tree, saying to myself that if the serpent came I would not listen to him.

Some people appear to feel that they are much wiser, much nearer to the truth and to realities than they were when they were children. They think of childhood as immeasurably beneath and behind them. I have never been able to join in such a notion. It often seems to me that we lose quite as much as we gain by our lengthened sojourn here. I should not at all wonder if the thoughts of our childhood, when we look back on it after the rending of this veil of our humanity, should prove less unlike what we were intended to derive from the teaching of life, nature, and revelation than the thoughts of our more sophisticated days.

However, this is mere speculation; while we are enveloped in the veil we cannot know who sees through it most clearly.

I was putting on my shoes again when Mr. Mompesson came back, and I remember that when I had settled the buttons to my mind, I asked him to tell me the rest of that story, whereupon he sat down upon the timber, looking at me with his ordinary sweet expression of grave calm.

“There was nothing more to be told about Eden,” he said.

"Where was it now?" I inquired. "I wished to see the outside of it."

"Where was it? it was gone. Men had travelled all over the world, but it was not to be found. Once there came a great flood of water, and most likely they swept Eden away."

"That must have been because God was displeased with us, or was it because He thought we should always be trying to find the way in?"

I think he answered, "that God Himself had found the way back for us into that garden;" but I understood something of its being in heaven, and of God's great love for us.

"Why did He love us?" I asked with infantine scorn. "I did not love Adam and Eve, they had been very unkind."

He said that if I would try to understand, he would tell me another story, and mentioning the familiar name to which I had hitherto attached little or no meaning, he began, and told me the old story, the happy story, the good news of the glorious child, and how angels came and sang to the shepherds as they watched their flocks by night. He told this with a tender recollection of what a little child he was speaking to—he must have done, for I understood some of his meaning, and remember it yet.

Children are so easily moved—I wept; but babe that I was, and ignorant, I said those were wicked people, and I hated them. He said "Christ the Saviour would forgive both them and us."

"But was not Christ dead?"

"He was dead when they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in the sepulchre."

I listened and wondered, and he told me how on that sultry morning long ago the women came before day dawned and looked in at the open door of the sepulchre where the body of Jesus had lain. At this point in his narrative I think it was that he took from his breast-pocket a little book, and read from it all the remainder of the Gospel story, beginning with the ever-comforting words, "Woman, why weepest thou," and ending, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." So, then, Christ the Redeemer lived again, he told me, and was gone up to heaven to pray for us, and if we trusted in Him, and strove to please Him, we should certainly go to Him when we died, and never see that place that I had seen a picture of.

When men were turned out of Eden they got worse and worse, and they could not make themselves any better; but the great Son of God, who sat with Him on the throne, promised that He would come down to this world to die for them, that God might forgive them, and take them to heaven itself, which was a better place than Eden.

I listened with eager wonder, but, strange to say, there was one

thing that I heard, with distrust—Christ was born in a stable. I asked my informant if he was *sure* of that. He answered with his serene smile—

“Yes, Christ was so humble that He chose to be born in a stable.”

Glimpses of beneficent miracles, the hot country, the aloes, the palm trees, the waters of that pool which angels were wont to trouble with their wings; glimpses of these things, broken, but still lovely, came to my mind as reflected from the precious fragments of this marvellous story; but I had a fear lest the end should be like the end of Eden, and when he told me anything more than commonly delightful to listen to, I begged him to repeat it for me again.

At last he told me the end. Perhaps to tell it in such a way was a new thing to him, perhaps this impressed his own heart the more; certain it is that when he had told me of the agony in the garden and the crown of thorns his voice, always sweet, became touched with unusual emotion.

Upon this, being very glad, I lifted up my face to kiss Mr. Mompesson. I had been a good deal awed and frightened while the issue of the event was doubtful, and now in my relief and exultation I danced about the place for joy. Most people, I should think, would have checked these manifestations of delight with severity, as irreverent and foolish. Mr. Mompesson did not. He sat looking on with his arms folded, repeating when I asked him that what he had told me was quite true, perfectly true; and when, tired at last, I came to him to be taken on his knee, he held me in his arms, and said that now I must try to be a good child.

I answered in all simplicity that now I had heard this story I meant to try, and I asked him whether he tried.

Who could hear such a question with equanimity. He did not reply at first; but when I pressed him, he answered with a sigh, “Sometimes.”

I remember looking in his face with surprise; but I was tired, so I laid my head on his shoulder, and we sat silent. What he was thinking of I cannot tell. My thoughts, with all their ignorance, were such as I could wish to have always. I thought of that beneficent Redeemer, and how I would try to find out what He wished me to do, that I might do it.

Now, as we had been told that we were not to play in the minster any more, we should have found it rather a dull place—in spite of our love for the old sexton—if it had not been for a certain little door. You opened this little door, and on windy days a kind of hollow moaning came down to it, and when you looked up you saw nothing but a worn stone stair. Snap and I, having once a good opportunity, went up this winding stair. Sometimes it was very dark, and then all at once, as we crept on, we came to a narrow looplight. Oh, so narrow! we could just but push our hand through it. And we

looked down, and saw the bluecoat boys playing in their playground, and saw the broad flat tops of the cedar trees in the vicar's garden.

At last we came to the bell-chamber, but the ominous hum there—for it was on the stroke of noon—rather frightened us, and we retreated and mounted again, coming out at last in a room which at first seemed nearly dark, but which grew lighter and pleasanter when our eyes became accustomed to it,—a place that no one wanted, and where nothing was kept, rough, dusky, and with strange hollows and niches in the walls. The roof had a little hole in it here and there, and the birds came through at their will. We adopted that place, stole up to it frequently, and brought to it certain possessions, as crumpled books full of pictures, dolls, and baskets for keeping young birds in. Many a happy hour I spent there, sitting on the floor, under a great beam that in one part stooped low over our heads, and here Snap told me a great many extraordinary things, some true and some of his own invention. We peopled the whole place with kings and soldiers, ghosts, and living celebrities. In one dim recess sat no less a personage than Queen Elizabeth. Near it was the tree where Brutus was resting before the battle when his evil genius looked at him; and a large doll of mine, in a particularly dusky corner, received a daily visit of condolence from us as the Empress Josephine, when her tyrant had got another mate.

I liked this place very much when the day was bright, for then little spots of sunshine would steal in, and creep cheerily along the floor; but sometimes there came a dark, cloudy day, and then the whole chamber would be veiled with a strange duskiness, which gave mysterious shapes to beams and rafters. Then I was often frightened, because Snap, whom nothing made afraid, used to fable that ghosts were hiding behind them, and would most likely peep out soon to look at us. Then indeed I used to tremble, and my face being covered with my hands at the first hint of the ghosts, I would listen while he held imaginary conversations with them, always demanding what they wanted in a bold voice, as manly as the circumstances permitted, and answering in the person of the said ghosts, with a weak, whining tone, that they were come to hear about Wallace or Giant Despair, or the battle of Trafalgar, according to the book he might have been reading aloud. Thereupon he generally ordered them to retire, and not come out till evening, and after a time, finding these fetches of his imagination not unnaturally subject to his bidding, I came to regard them with less awe, and, in fact, till a certain memorable day, I regarded all sorts of ghosts with a pity which was somewhat akin to contempt.

On this particular day Snap proposed to leave me in "Hades," as he called this place, and go down to the sexton's house for an old book that he wanted to borrow. There were a good many spots of



sunshine that day, and I had my doll and a bag of crumbs for the mice, who would often come out and eat them even in our presence. I do not remember how old I was, but I was certainly getting on in life, for I had arrived at a point when one desires to be depended on, and not wish to be thought a baby; therefore I took care to repeat to myself that I was not at all afraid, and I sat a long time amusing myself very pleasantly, when all of a sudden I heard a creaking on the stairs, and then a pause, and then a kind of snort. I pricked up my little head, for the sounds were unusual; but presently something like regular footsteps was heard, and I of course supposed them to be Snap's, and was much encouraged; but willing to guard against any possible contingency, I covered my eyes with my hands, because in case this should be a ghost, I did not wish to have anything to do with it.

What a loud foot this possible ghost had! I was soon sure that it was not Snap who was coming, and I thought if it was a ghost it could be no other than the ghost of Cesar; so I crouched down closer, squeezed my hands over my eyes, and presently, with a sort of wheezing noise, something heavy came in, and started, and nearly tumbled down, crying out—

"Bless my heart! Bless me! bless me!"

Something seemed in a great hurry. It tumbled or rolled down the stairs with more creaking and more wheezing; then a door was shut below; the ghost had shut himself in among the great bells. I was so glad he was gone!

Snap soon after came up. He cried to me to make haste and run down, for the sexton was very soon going home. We had not time for much talk; but as we went down Snap saw that I looked just a little alarmed.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"A ghost came," I whispered, "while you were away."

"Nonsense!" he answered. "What did it do?"

"It wheezed," I replied. "I think it was a sick ghost. It wheezed, and then it rolled down-stairs."

"I don't believe it," said Snap, and so dismissed the subject.

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### CHAPTER III.

"And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house."

ACTS xi. 13.

Our nurse had a very easy conscience—a most undesirably easy conscience—considering the circumstances under which she was placed. She suffered us from day to day to go into the minster, though the old sexton, when she came to fetch us home, could seldom give any



account of where we were. We always appeared in the nursery when we were hungry, which, thanks to the regularity of our appetites, was generally about our dinner time, and that seemed to satisfy her.

The day after I had heard that odd noise of wheezing on the stairs, I positively refused to go up to "Hades," and we accordingly remained below. But the day after that, as Snap declared that he should go up, I crept up after him, and he insisted on peeping into the door of the bell chamber, just to be sure, as he said, that nobody was there. We took with us some crumbs and crusts of bread which we had collected for our tame mice and the young sparrows.

We did peep into the bell-chamber, and there in a hole we saw a nest full of nearly fledged pigeons; two of them fluttered on to the floor, as, forgetful of the ghost, we ran in. We took them, and tying them loosely into Snap's handkerchief, stood a few minutes on tiptoe peeping through a loop-light and chattering together. In one corner of the chamber lay several nests, with eggs in them. They were half covered with a man's jacket (not a jacket such as the sexton wore), and beside them lay a very dirty little song book, and a red pocket-handkerchief. These things did not surprise us; they were clearly the possession of some mortal, and we feared not mortals, and we argued together respecting the ghost which I said I had heard on the stairs tramping up; as well as respecting other everyday matters.

Finally we withdrew, and crept up the set of wooden steps which led into "Hades;" they were little better than a ladder, but we were well accustomed to them, and when we had shut the door Snap said that he had peeped through the crack of the hinges as he came up the steps, and that there *was* somebody in the bell-chamber, standing straight upright in the corner behind its heavy door, which was open.

I took the easiest solution that offered, and said perhaps it was the ghost. "Oh no," he said, "it had dirty nails, and ghosts, he was sure, never had dirty nails."

Of course I was immediately sure of it too, but why did the man stand behind the door? was it that we might not see him? Snap could not tell. We untied the handkerchief, made a splendid nest for our pigeons of hay and feathers, for the wasteful sparrows always brought up far more of these materials than they wanted; then we fed them and our tame mice, who no sooner heard our voices than they peeped out, and twinkled their bead-like eyes at us, and afterwards Snap, standing on the beam, which was our customary seat, made these small creatures an harangue, which was partly moral, partly fabulous. First, with much self-laudation of his kindness in being at the pains to teach such inferior creatures, he related to them, as he generally did on these occasions, the history of the war between the mice and the cranes. Never was there such a restless audience. Little

squeaks were heard now and then all through it, and little rushes behind beams, and sudden darts out into the open floor, while all the time an unceasing chirp and chirrup was kept up in the nests out of reach among the tie-beams. Finally, while the mice, who had not yet finished every crumb, made a concluding scamper down the beams, and popped into their holes, he delivered to them a serious lecture on the vice of greediness. "They need not think," he observed, "that even when he was away, they could snatch the crumbs from one another unobserved, for there was a person near at hand who was not exactly a gentleman, because he had dirty nails, but who knew when mice were greedy and despised them. For himself, he was soon going away, but they had better improve their manners, for during the afternoon that person might very likely come up and look at them."

Very likely indeed, as the sequel proved, for I was still listening to this harangue with unbounded admiration, when the door was cautiously pushed open, and through the dim chamber a man came up to us, who was clad in a fustian jacket and grey worsted stockings: he had no shoes. He seemed very careful not to make a noise, and when he got close up to Snap, who was standing on the beam, he said, "Servant, sir."

"How do you do?" said Snap, by way of reply.

This man looked as if he had not been shaved for some time, and his eyes had an eager, hungry glitter.

"What's your name, hey, sir?" he next asked.

"Tom Graham," replied Snap; "and this is my sister—she is Dorothea Graham."

"O," was the man's sole reply, and he stared at us very hard, and asked if we came into the minster roof every day.

"Every day when we can," said Snap. "Do you?"

I did not like that man, and did not wish him to talk to me—he made a wheezing noise as he breathed, which reminded me of the ghost, so I withdrew to the corner where the mice had their holes, and began to watch them. They were very amusing, and I presently forgot to listen to Snap and the man as they whispered together, and busied myself with them, and afterwards with my old doll in the recess. In a little while the man glided away very quietly, and Snap said he was gone back to the bell-chamber; and this chamber, moreover, was a place very seldom entered, for the bells were rung from below.

Snap then told me with some exultation that this man had lived for several days in the minster or crouching on the roof, for he was hiding from his enemies!

Extraordinary story this, but it did not surprise us at all; Snap had often told me about people who were obliged to fly from their enemies, and the sexton himself had a long story about some old

Saxon king who was reputed to have concealed himself in the crypts for two months while the victorious Danes were scouring the country.

Of course we were not to tell the beadle or the sexton—indeed he had impressed that very strongly on Snap's mind, and said he should be very angry if he did, and Snap had promised most earnestly not to do so.

The man had no sword to be sure, and no armour, nor weapon of any kind. This circumstance was disappointing to us, and a surprise, because the warriors in Shakespeare, both those who fought and those who fled, always had swords or rapiers, or something to fight with. Snap had asked the man what he had done with his sword, but he said he had only a knife, and that "would serve his turn if any one came near him." We hoped that no one would, and took his part against his enemies, without particularly considering who they might be. I resolved, also, that the next day, when we came into the minster, I would bring him a posy of daisies and buttercups.

We went home, and, as may easily be believed, no one asked us whether we had seen a man in the minster, and whereabouts he hid himself. Every time nurse spoke to us, that was what I, however, expected her to say; but as the evening wore on I nearly forgot the man, till just before bed-time, when I stole into the green bedroom and looked at the minster tower to see whether he was peeping out at any of the loop-lights.

The next day was wet, but the day after that being hot and fine, our nurse took out dear little Amy's best pelisse, dressed the pretty little smiling creature, and putting on our common suits, led us all into the minster; and saying that she wanted to take Amy to her cousin's farm in the country, left us with her father.

Snap almost immediately began to climb the tower, on his way to the bell-chamber. He said he had promised the man that he would go and see him again; and besides, he wanted to ask him what "his enemies" would do to him if they got him. So up we both climbed till we got to the dim part of the stairs, where the massive door of the chamber might be seen. I liked to hear that door open—it used to creak with a kind of complaining noise, and besides, it was pricked full of minute round holes, which Snap said had little worms in them.

When we reached the said door Snap knocked with his open hand, and then whispered through the great key-hole, "Man, man, let me in, I am not one of your enemies." Upon this the door was softly opened, and a great fierce, unwashed, and unshaven face looked out. We were told to walk in, and the man asked in a deep voice which rather frightened us, whether either of us had told anyone where he was. We both declared that we had *not*, adding that we knew it would be very *wicked* to tell!! Upon this he seemed satisfied,

and Snap venturing respectfully to ask him how he was, he replied, that he was "fairly clemmed," by which he meant that he was suffering from hunger. His appearance was anything but heroic; yet we both regarded him with awe and deference, which was not diminished even when the fellow said, "If I know'd of a boy that could be trusted, I'd send him to buy me a loaf of bread." Snap on this rose proudly up. There was a baker's shop on the south side of the minster, and scarcely a stone's throw from the porch. He received money and instructions to buy a half-quartern loaf there, and if he was asked any questions, to say that it was for his little sister to feed her young birds with, or he might say that he was hungry.

"But that would be a story," said Snap; "and besides, Missy and I have had our dinner; we are not hungry, thank you."

I do not remember how this difficulty was got over; but Snap certainly went to fetch the loaf, and I meanwhile was left with this man, who turned pale and frequently shivered. Most likely he felt the extreme danger of sending a child like my brother on such an errand; but hunger being too strong for him he could not resist the opportunity.

At last Snap was heard coming up again, the door was softly opened, and he appeared with triumph in his eyes and a great loaf in his arms. "They never asked me what I was going to do with it," he observed. "Most likely they thought I had come to fetch it for our cook, and nobody saw me bring it into the minster; for Wilson was standing with his back to me rubbing the pulpit rails." Our man took the loaf with eager eyes, and when he told us that for the last five days he had lived on birds' eggs only, we were not so greatly surprised as we otherwise might have been at the way in which he tore it to pieces and devoured it.

Unless I am very much mistaken, we visited this man in his airy lodging five or six times, and Snap was honoured almost every day by receiving his commissions. Once he was ill, and I was left with him while my little brother was sent down with a bottle and desired to fill it at the tap in the vestry. It was a bottle that we had frequently seen on the vestry table, but we never doubted our friend's perfect right to the use of it. Snap on this occasion was detained by a cause no less important than the meeting of Mr. Mompesson himself in the minster, and he telling him that there was going to be a wedding, desired him not to play with that bottle, but put it in its place; after which, if he was a good boy, he might stay in the quire and see this wedding. So Snap was obliged to remain and look on, though he knew that "our man," as we called the villain up in the tower, would be much alarmed at his long stay. After a long time he was able to fill the bottle and come up. Meanwhile I, left in charge of the invalid, endeavoured to amuse him by telling him stories. He was stretched on the rough floor, and his lips were parched with fever and excite-

ment. He must have felt the extreme risk he ran, from our having discovered his retreat. Yet it behoved him to speak us fair and be kind to us; for on our voluntary visits he almost entirely depended for his scanty meals.

I suppose that villain, as he undoubtedly was, must have been particularly fond of children, for I can remember that so far from being afraid to be left with him, I actually liked him, and was never tired of hearing him talk about his little lass, who was just my height and would be "five years old come Michaelmas." Her name was Sally, and being frequently questioned by me, he told the colour of her hair and eyes, and described her best frock—a print one—"with something of a pink pattern on it," and her bonnet with a blue ribbon. So, as I said, I liked this man; I liked to play with the blue glass buttons of his velveteen waistcoat, and to wind up his silver watch; also to hear him talk of his "missis," meaning his wife, and how she whipped Sally when she was a naughty girl, how Sally ran to meet him sometimes when he came home from work, and rode home on his shoulder.

Perhaps the reflection that he could never hope to see this wife and this child again, made him think of them with regret; perhaps the tender age of the children who ministered to him made him willing to choose for them from his guilty mind some of its few innocent remembrances. I cannot tell how this may have been, but I remember how sorry I was that day for him, while Snap remained so long below. I could not bear to see him looking so miserable, and as I sat upon his fustian jacket I told him as many fairy tales as I could think of.

At length Snap came up with the bottle, and the poor prisoner drank the draught, which had been got at so much risk to himself, with unutterable contentment.

Our friend Wilson was busy in the minster, a long way from the vestry, and taking advantage of this fact we both went down and brought up the great glass decanter. How our little hearts beat during this adventure! how I watched Wilson from behind a pillar while Snap waited in the vestry till I should sign to him to come out! We wished the man would let us tell Wilson that he was there. We assured him that Wilson was a very kind man, and would be good to him. It was of no use, however, and we were obliged to be content with waiting on him ourselves.

The least noise would make him tremble; and, seeing this, I that day asked him how long he thought it would be before his enemies found him; but he pulled down his heavy black brows and looked at me with such displeasure, that I crept behind Snap to hide myself.

I do not remember how long we ministered to this man—perhaps for a fortnight. Sometimes we acted scenes or told stories to amuse him. He was extremely restless, and would pace the dim chamber

for hours together; but a kind of stealthy pleasure would dawn in his face when we appeared, and had answered the always-repeated question as to whether we had told any one. He often said our presence was a great relief to him, and once told Snap that he felt very bad o' nights, and generally came down and slept on the vestry table.

At last one day when we came to see our man, we found the door of the bell-chamber wide open. He was gone, and not a trace remained of him! We were very glad that he had escaped from his enemies, and we often talked of him between ourselves, but we never told any one of his having been concealed in the minster—no, not even our beloved Mr. Mompesson—and on looking back I feel quite convinced that we had no notion we were doing wrong in this concealment. In fact, I believe we supposed that we were performing a sacred duty.

Who the man was I never discovered with any certainty; but years after, in reading a recent history of my native shire, I found an account of the escape of a certain prisoner from the county gaol.

This man, Sam Potter by name, was described as a convicted sheep-stealer and supposed murderer, and his escape was made in the daytime, while a market was being held below. A rush of persons was made to receive and detain him as he descended by a rope, but among them must have been several accomplices; for the cry was to pass him to the front, and the crowd changed about, and, being impatient, pushed and searched, but to no purpose. Some prison clothes were found on the ground, and there was a fight between two men, who conveniently quarrelled just at that moment; but the felon was not to be seen! And he had never been discovered since. This gaol I found was forty miles from our minster; but the date given as that of Sam Potter's escape was just a fortnight earlier than that on which we found the strange man in the tower. I therefore incline to think, though I have nothing else to go by, that Sam Potter and "our man" were one and the same person, that he overheard Snap telling me how he had seen a man behind the door, and thinking his only chance lay in speaking us fair, and getting us to promise not to tell, he had come out to propitiate us, and had tried the desperate experiment of letting children be his purveyors.

Our intimacy with Mr. Mompesson soon made us cease to search for "our man," though we did not forget him; and, in case he should return, would often carry up bits of bread and other provisions, and hide them in the crevices that he had been accustomed to make his larder.

Every day we went to see "Mompey" in his seven-sided parlour, and sometimes we presided at his frugal dinner, which took place just after our early tea. Snap was promoted to cut up his lettuces, I peppered his peas, and occasionally partook of the plums from his

pudding. His landlady waited. I was privileged to have a small silver fork, and help myself from his plate. My brother was not allowed to take any such liberty; but he was not jealous, indeed he regarded me as a very young child, and took it amiss that I could not help lisping. We might have consumed more of Mompey's plums, but that about this time we had the measles, and when we were getting better, used to be very cross, and cry, and pettishly quarrel with one another. One day, as I well remember, Mr. Mompesson came to see us in our nursery. Nurse, as usual, was away, gone out for a walk with Amy. The housemaid brought up Mompey by his own desire, and he helped us to make a Roman fortification for us with our wooden "bricks." On this occasion, as we all three sat on the floor as happy as possible, a great ringing was heard at the front bell; but nothing was farther from our thoughts than that we should be disturbed, and we were cheerfully going on with our play, when there was a noise on the back-stairs of people running up, so fast that we thought the house must be on fire; but we had not time to tell each other our thoughts before the door was burst open, and in rushed our papa and mamma, the former laughing, and the latter crying for joy at seeing us again.

They each seized a child, and I have not a more distinct recollection of anything which took place in my childhood than of seeing Mompey a minute after sitting on the floor without his coat, blushing among the heaps of wooden bricks, while the laughing, crying, exclaiming, and kissing were going on around him. At last he rose, and fetched mamma a chair. It was the rocking-chair; and, as he handed it to her, she observed his presence and appearance with very great surprise; he was blushing up to the eyes, and had not yet put his coat on.

"Are you Mrs. Green's servant?" she asked, gravely and sweetly, for she actually thought he was the footman of an old aunt of ours.

He laughed softly, and, with a good deal of stammering and blushing, contrived to explain that he was one of the cnrates; but before he had done my father began to shake hands with him, and presently helped him on with his coat. Coats must have been made tighter then, I think, than they are now, for I remember that it was no slight effort to get Mompey into his.

Now that papa and mamma were come home, we were very happy. Our parents, observing some charming proofs of our ignorance, applauded nurse; finding us also fat and well, they spoke of her openly as a treasure, gave her a silk gown and a shawl, with pinecones all over it. We, of course, said nothing of the hours among which she had left us to wander about by ourselves; children seldom complain of neglect, or even of unkindness, and we were unconscious of either.

Some time after this I had a great disappointment, the smart of which I sometimes feel to this day. We had made acquaintance



with Wilson's grandson, a boy about twelve years old, and one day when we were up in the tower (for we three often went there when our mother was out, and nurse wanted to get rid of us) we talked to this boy about several things that Mr. Mompesson had told us of—specially, as I remember, about angels.

"Oh, Titus," I said to this boy, "I wish I could see an angel!"

"And why shouldn't you?" he replied. "I could show you one very easy. My father's got one in his shop."

"An angel!" I exclaimed. "Has he got a real angel—a live angel?"

I was little more than five years old. Let that fact be an excuse for the absurdity of the question. Snap was absorbed in his book, and took no notice.

"Is it alive?" I repeated.

"I don't know what you mean," he replied. "It ain't alive nor it ain't dead; but it is an angel, and has long wings and a crown on its head."

"And how did he catch it?" I exclaimed, in the plenitude of my infantine simplicity.

"He didn't catch it," replied Titus. "He borrowed it of another man."

I shall never forget the awe—the ecstasy—which thrilled my heart on hearing this.

"Do you think," I inquired, "that he would let me see it?"

Titus replied that he would, "with the greatest of pleasure." He was a very stupid boy, and when I inquired whether it would be wicked in me to go and see it, he stared vacantly, and said I had better come at once, for very soon it would be his dinner-time. I would rather have waited; but then I thought perhaps that might be my only opportunity, as no doubt the angel would shortly go home again to heaven. So I followed, longing and yet trembling, and Titus took me out of doors, and into a yard where there was a great shed. It was a large place, full of chips and shavings, and at the end furthest from the entrance there was a table covered with a large white cloth, which had settled to the shape of a figure lying beneath it, and gave evident indications of limbs and features.

"There," said Titus, "That's the angel. Father keeps it covered, because it's such a handsome one."

My heart beat high; but when I marked the bier-like appearance of the table, and that there was a recumbent figure beneath the drapery, I snatched away my hand, and shrieking out, "Oh, it is dead! the Angel is dead!" fell down on the floor, and lost recollection for a moment from excessive fright. Presently I saw that Titus was standing by me, staring in alarm, and I sat up, shaking, and feeling very cold.

"I told you, miss, that it wasn't alive, nor it wasn't dead," he

observed. "How should it be? Don't be afraid; come and look at it."

I felt sick, and shut my eyes while he led me to it and put back the drapery; then I ventured to open them, and oh, unutterable disappointment! it was a wooden angel, and there were veinings of wood upon her wings.

"Now," said Titus, "what were you afraid on?"

"This is not the sort of angel I meant," I answered; and added, "I meant an angel that had been in heaven."

Titus, stupid as he was, looked at me with astonishment on hearing this, and answered with reverential awe, "Miss, you must not talk in that fashion. That sort of angel doesn't fly down here."

"Are you sure?" I inquired.

"Why, of course I am," he answered, sincerely enough, though strangely. "If they came in snowy weather they would get their wings froze."

"I know they do come," I replied. "God sends them with messages. Mr. Mompesson told me He did."

Titus, as I remember, did not clear up this mystery for me; but he answered, "This is an *imitation* angel. Father is making two for the new organ. The man that he borrowed it of made it."

"Then had he seen an angel?"

"No, sure."

"How did he know, then, what angels were like?"

That Titus could not tell.

"Where did that man live?"

"He lived at Norwich."

This reply entirely satisfied me. Norwich, I knew, was a great way off. It might be a good deal nearer to heaven than was the place where I lived. I cannot say that I distinctly thought it was; but it was remote, and utterly unknown. All things, therefore, were possible concerning it.

I looked down on the angel's wings as it lay on the long, low table, and I believed that it was rightly carved, and that they knew all about angels at Norwich.

(To be continued.)